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BOSTON UNIVERSITY

Graduate School

Thesis

The Political Influence of the Prophets.

by

Raymond Wilson Hallman

( A. B., Dickinson College 1931)

submitted in partial fulfillment of the require-

ments for the degree of

Master of Arts

1933.

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## The Political Influence of the Prophets.

"Hebrew prophecy is the most remarkable and profound movement the human spirit has ever known; history can show no parallel to it. Though limited to a comparatively brief period and confined to an insignificant corner of the world, it has proved to be one of the most influential factors moulding the character and destiny of mankind." (1)

Although the origins of prophecy can be traced beyond the history of Israel it did not become an organized movement until it came under the influence of Israel. In Israel, however, it was not merely an office to which a few people were called but was a recognized institution and an established order somewhat similar to that of the priesthood. (2)

In order to get a better understanding of the prophets and their influence upon the political situation of their times it will be well first to get a glimpse at the other institutions of the time. Although they were not likely organized very highly the "wise men" or "seers" had their own sphere distinct from that of the prophets or priests. It was their duty to give counsel and to show the best course to be followed in any particular case. They were men of extraordinary insight who were capable of seeing things that were hidden from the average individual. (I Kings 3:16-28; 10:1-10). People went to them for information of various kinds and

(1) Thorn, G. W.: The Prophets of Israel p. 13

(2) Knudson, A. C.: Prophetic Movement in Israel p. 11



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(1) Thurn, G. W.: The Prophets of Israel p. 12  
(2) Knudsen, A. C.: Prophetic Movement in Israel p. 11



especially for help in finding things that had been lost. Evidence of this is found in the story of Saul when he seeks the advice of Samuel in finding his father's asses, that had been lost. (I Samuel 9:5ff). These Seers were evidently held in good repute for we hear the servant in the same story saying to Saul, "Behold now, there is in this city a man of God, and he is a man that is held in honor." (I Samuel 9:6) The Seers did not constitute a closed order but required only natural ability for entrance. Neither social standing nor sex was a bar to the admittance of any person for it happens that the first one mentioned was a woman. (II Samuel 14:1-24).

Figuring much more prominently in Israel's history were the priests. The primary function of the priests was that of declaration and interpretation of the law. For the Hebrews this had a double character. It took them into the civil as well as the ecclesiastical realm. It was their duty to administer justice as well as to regulate public worship. Hence the function of the priest was both judicial and sacrificial. Entrance into this priestly class, and even ~~in~~ one's station in it were determined entirely by birth. (1) Due primarily to this hereditary character of their office the priests were naturally conservative. They were concerned more with the past and in maintaining the privileges of their own class than they were with the higher teachings with which the prophets dealt.

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(1) Knudson, A. C.: Prophetic Movement in Israel p. 14



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stitutions stands that of prophecy. As the Seer was concerned with "counsel" and as the priest thought in terms of "law" so the prophet was primarily concerned with "the word". The distinctive duty of the prophet was the mediation between God and man. (1) It has been etymologically argued that prediction of future events was the distinctive sphere of the prophet in that the latter part of the word "prophecy" is derived from a Greek verb meaning "to speak" and the prefix "pro" usually means "before" or "beforehand". This view however is incorrect and cannot be proved by the etymological argument for the Semitic languages generally do not possess the power of forming compound words and so the idea of foretelling cannot be expressed in them by a simple word. (2)

The Hebrew word for prophet, on the other hand, was nâbi, and it is here that we get a clearer insight into the nature of prophecy. From a strictly Hebrew point of view there is very little etymology that can be given to the word. It is necessary to go to the other Semitic languages to arrive at the correct meaning. In Assyrian the root word naba'a would be rendered, "to speak", "to talk" to, "announce", "to name". (3) This would make the nâbi a speaker, or one who talks. From the Arabic source the same root word is not rendered in the general sense of "speaking" but rather in a special sense of "proclaiming" or "announcing". The specific difference lies in the fact that the speaker talks not of himself but as an agent for some other person or distinctive in-

(1) Ibid., p. 16

(2) Cornill, C. H.: The Prophet of Israel p. 5

(3) Ibid., p. 9



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(1) Ibid., p. 18  
(2) Cornill, C. H.: The Prophet of Israel, p. 2  
(3) Ibid., p. 9



stigation. (1) The nabi is then one who speaks as he is bidden by the one in whose stead he is speaking.

"A further point to be noted with reference to prophecy is the fact that it was primarily social or national in character. The "wise man" ..... was interested chiefly in the individual. The priest had to do for the most part with ecclesiastical matters -- with what we may call the church. The prophet, however, fixed his attention upon the nation. In ecclesiastical matters as such he had no interest, and the individual he apparently subordinated to the social group. At any rate, what he aimed at was not the conversion of individual souls so much as the transformation of society. He looked forward to a redeemed nation -- a kingdom of God. " (2)

The prophets, when they first emerged in Israel, were quite gregarious and we see them travelling and working in groups. At first they were not held in very high repute because of the extremely emotional and ecstatic nature of their activity. Consequently we see Amos denying any connection with the prophetic movement largely because of the stigma that had <sup>become</sup> attached to the movement. (Amos 7:14) By means of music or some external stimulus they allowed themselves to get worked up into such a state of emotional frenzy that they lost practically all of their self control. Arriving at such a state they were supposed to be in the closest communion with Yahweh. Whatever words or incoherent syllables ~~which~~ they muttered while in this ecstatic trance were thought

(1) Ibid., p. 10

(2) Knudson, A. C.: The Prophetic Movement in Israel p. 19



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(1) Ibid., p. 30  
(2) Robinson, A. C.: The Prophetic Movement in Israel, p. 19



by the rest of the group to come directly from Yahweh and were consequently followed strictly. It is not at all unusual to find such circumstances existing in Israel for in the history of religions many similar things may be found. Other religions have even carried it to greater lengths than we find existing at this time.

When the characteristics of the "seers" and those of the ecstatic prophets came together the greatest good was derived from both. "It was natural that they should mutually influence each other, and that the qualities of the one should tend gradually to coalesce with those of the other. This, at any rate, is what seems to have taken place in Israel, the result being the production of a new type of prophet, one who has no complete analogue among other peoples. The seer felt the contagion of the ecstatic's intensity and passion. He ceased to wait for others to call upon him. He devoted himself no longer merely to such individual items of interest, as were brought to his attention. His activity became continuous and aggressive. He then<sup>rew</sup> himself into the midst of the life of the people, seeking in all the power of his command to stir them up to meet whatever emergency confronted them. The ecstatic on the other hand surrendered himself to the direction and restraint of the seer, subjecting himself to such discipline as the fine spiritual sense of the seer dictated. Passion and insight thus combined to produce the later Hebrew prophet." (1)

(1) Knudson: A. C.: Beacon Lights of Prophecy p. 35



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(1) Knudsen: A. C.: Bacon Lights of Prophecy p. 25



## II Great Personalities Previous to the Pre-literary Prophets

### A- MOSES

"The history of Israel is a history of prophecy." (1)  
When we have said that we have summed up in a sentence the influence which the prophets had upon the political situations of their times. Prophecy not only influenced but was the politics of Israel in several instances. We have histories of the time before the prophetic age but then they are inadequate and show more of the surface of things than the real heart of the event. "But the real history of Israel is a history in which men of prophetic rank and name stand at the great turning points of the people's life, and direct the movements. The inner progress of the people was throughout guided by prophets who fertilized the religious life of the nation with new thoughts, or nourished the seeds of truth and the higher aspirations already planted in the heart of the people into fuller growth and fruitfulness; and who, especially in the many crises of the people's history, prepared for each crisis, as, for example, at the destruction of the State, by revealing truths regarding God which enabled the people safely to encounter the storm, and not sink beneath it." (2)

Although we have been accustomed to think of Moses as a lawgiver and author his "chief glory is rather that he was first and greatest among the prophets of the Old Testament dispensation. Moses did two things: 1. He organized the

(1) Davidson, A. B. : Old Testament Prophecy p. 16

(2) Ibid., pp. 16-17



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(1) Davidson, A. B. : Old Testament Prophecy p. 16(2) Ibid., pp. 16-17



heterogeneous elements into a national unity; 2. He gave to this unity a practical monotheism." (1) Moses in this sense combined the twofold activity which is common to all the prophets, national and religious. Though the latter will necessarily enter into our conception of him it is primarily with the first that we are concerned in this thesis.

In saying that Moses formed a national unity it is not meant that he created it out of nothing. In matters of this kind it is impossible to get at the beginning. "Moses found materials; but he passed a new fire through them, and by its heat welded them into a unity; he breathed a spirit into the people that animated it for all time to come." (2)

The materials which he found were chiefly religious in character. The people already had some knowledge of Yahweh and some faith in him. It was primarily to this faith that Moses appealed in getting the children of Israel out of Egypt and in forming them into a national unity. The two ideas cannot be separated in the life of Moses for the one implies the other. Political unity depended upon the faith in Yahweh, the God of Israel, and this faith was preserved by the political unity that was achieved. Twice during the life of Moses he was the subject of great religious experiences out of which grew his realization of his twofold task of unifying the nation and of giving it this unity a practical monotheism. Thus we see that in the personal life of Moses everything hinged about the two great ideas and as they

- (1) Eiselen: F. C.: Prophecy and the Prophets p. 25  
 (2) Davidson, A. B.: Old Testament Prophecy p. 22







worked in his own life so they worked in his relation to the nation which he was trying to organize. The political influence which this, the first of the prophets, had is summed up by Robinson thus: "The whole of the later history of Israel, political as well as religious, is based on this fundamental act of union as achieved by Moses." (1)

#### B- DEBORAH

When we reach the time of the prophetess Deborah, which is the period of the Judges, we find a different situation. The high spirit created in the tribes by Moses and the redemption from Egypt was gone. This spirit which fused them into a national unity and which gave them such a sense of invincibility that they were able to overcome the greatest odds against them in the conquest of Canaan is no longer with them. It is not now the Israel that had come out of Egypt but a new and larger nation that had absorbed a great deal of the Canaanitic population and with it many new religious practices which in turn affected the political consciousness. The tribes which had been united in purpose for a time are now but little interested in each other. Each is settling down to preserve its own integrity and unity. (2) While thus the actual unity of the tribes had deteriorated there came forward the prophetess Deborah to uphold the ideal unity and to seek adherence to it. The role of the prophetess was to recreate in the people of Israel both an understanding of, and a faith in Yahweh and a courage toward action. (3) Through her own great

(1) Robinson, T. H.: History of the Hebrew and Jewish People  
(in Abingdon Commentary) p. 62

(2) Ibid., p.33

(3) Radolph Kittel Great men and Movements in Israel -p52.



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(1) Robinson, T. H.: History of the Hebrew and Jewish People (in Abingdon Commentary) p. 53  
(2) Ibid., p. 53  
(3) Redolph Kittel: Great men and movements in Israel - p. 58.



faith in Yahweh and undaunted courage she helped the people achieve the same themselves. As was found to be true of Moses the political influence which she had was bound up with her faith in Yahweh. Because she was able to help them find Yahweh, they found themselves and finding themselves found success.

### III Pre-literary Prophecy

#### A- SAMUEL

It is natural to expect that the individual tribes which we have noticed would sooner or later come together in the form of a national monarchy. It was a material culmination of this national life of the Hebrews when this took place. It is consequently worthy of note, to find a prophet the leading figure in bringing it to pass. It is to Samuel that this distinction goes.(1)

Before this time there had been occasional breaks with the Philistines but the Hebrews did not come into full opposition with them until the time of Samuel. The Philistines a non-Semitic people were, as the Hebrews, immigrants in Palestine and had arrived slightly earlier. They had settled in the rich coast land west of the Judaeen hills which was in the great highway between the Euphrates and the Nile. In pushing their way out they naturally tried to move along this highway toward Damascus and thus came into open conflict with the Hebrews. It was at Aphek, in this section of the country,

(1) Peritz, L. J.: Old Testament History p. 123



faith in Yahweh and undaunted courage she helped the people achieve the same themselves. As was found to be true of Moses the political influence which she had was bound up with her faith in Yahweh. Because she was able to help them find Yahweh, they found themselves and finding themselves found success.

III Pre-literate Prophecy

A-SAMUEL

It is natural to expect that the individual tribes which we have noticed would sooner or later come together in the form of a national monarchy. It was a material culmination of this national life of the Hebrews when this took place. It is consequently worthy of note, to find a prophet the leading figure in bringing it to pass. It is to Samuel that this distinction goes.(1)

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(1) Peritz, L. J.: Old Testament History, p. 183



where Israel met defeat and lost "the ark of the covenant of Jehovah" to the Philistines<sup>1</sup>. (2) (I Samuel 4:1-7:2)

With such a situation in existence one could expect either annihilation of the tribes of Israel or a coalition of their forces to defeat their common enemy. In the latter course of action political unity would be required and it is to this end that the prophet Samuel enters into the picture as a significant character.

Saul, a Benjamite who was in search of his father's asses, came to Samuel to inquire about them. Seeing him, Samuel, guided by a divine insight recognized him as the man under whom Israel could be united and brought "out of the hands of the Philistines". Samuel caused him to stay all night and after talking matters over secretly anointed him king. It is evident that this interview had a great influence upon Saul for "when he had turned his back to go from Samuel God gave him another heart." (I Samuel 10:9). Shortly after this the city of Jabesh - Gilead was besieged by the Ammonites and in grave danger of surrender. They sent for aid from other tribes but got nothing but tears for their supplication. Saul had kept Samuel's previous instructions to himself but when he heard of such shameful action he was spurred to action. "And the Spirit of God came mightily upon Saul when he heard those words, and his anger was kindled greatly. And he took a yoke of oxen, and cut them in pieces, and sent them throughout all the borders of Israel by the hand of

(1) Ibid., p. 122



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messengers, saying, Whosoever cometh not forth after Saul and after Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen. And the dread of Jehovah fell on the people, and they came out as one man." (I Samuel 11:6-7). Some difficulties came in the actual establishment of Saul as king but it was accomplished and the nation was saved from political dissemination.

It was thus by the great insight and foresight of a prophet that the political situation of Israel was saved again. We have seen that it was started by a man who was essentially a prophet, it was kept alive by the prophetess, Deborah and is now saved from destruction by the prophet Samuel. "It was he who first saw the need of a monarchy as the one way of saving Israel politically and who pointed out the new king. He thus introduced a new era in the history of Israel. He brought in a new form of government, and in the person of the king gave an outward and visible expression to the religious unity of the people." (1)

#### B- SONS OF THE PROPHETS

At the time of Samuel, and later we see groups of prophets who went about the country prophesying in an ecstatic sort of way. The exact nature of these groups is hard to determine. Their activity must have been characterized by an excited and ecstatic demeanor for the verb "prrophecy" came to be used in the sense of "rave" (I Samuel 18:10). Such a thing caused this movement not to be held in very high regard for it is evidently reflected in the denial by Amos of any connection

(1) Knudson: A. C.: The Beacon Lights of Prophecy p. 13



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to it in saying: "I was no prophet, neither was I one of the sons of the prophets" (Amos 7:14).

These "sons of the prophets" made no important contribution to the religious thought but did play an important part in the religious life of the people and furnished the soil out of which the later literary prophets sprung. "The work of an Amos, Isaiah, or Jeremiah, would have been impossible but for the tradition and psychological atmosphere created by the nameless prophets who served in the ranks." (1)

It was on the other hand, likely that it was the political situation which drew out these groups and caused them to spring into being. It cannot be asserted definitely but may be suggested that the intense feeling, created by the subjection of the Hebrews to the Philistines and the growing desire for independence took a religious turn and resulted in the "sons of the prophets". They "went through the country with the more or less definite purpose of stirring the people up to the point where they would be willing to make whatever sacrifice was necessary in order to throw off the yoke of the hated enemy. The prophetic movement was thus at the outset patriotic as well as religious." (2)

#### C NATHAN

From the time of Samuel until the emergence of the great literary prophets with Amos there was no really great prophetic voice but there were several that played important parts in the life of Israel. The chief claim which Nathan

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(2) Ibid., p. 21



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had to importance came in two places. The first of these came in his emphatic denunciation of the immorality of David in taking the wife of Uriah by having Uriah killed in battle. (II Samuel 12:1-15). His great phrase, "Thou art the man," has become a classic utterance. He was evidently a confidential advisor to David or he would not have escaped with his life after the utterance of such denunciation.

The second instance is of greater importance from our point of view in showing his political relationship to the king. David was now an old man and there was needed a younger and stronger man to carry on the work of the kingdom. Adonijah seeing this, determined that he was the man to fill the position and began "pulling strings" to secure it for himself. He was not very wise in his selection of strings, however, for "Zadok the priest, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and Nathan the prophet and Shimei, and Rei, and the mighty men that belonged to David, were not with Adonijah." (I Kings 1:8) Learning of the plot of Adonijah Nathan went to Bath-Sheba, the mother of Solomon, and told her to inform David of the plot and to remind him of his promise to make Solomon king. This she did and was quickly followed by Nathan who was ushered into the king's presence with lordly pomp to reiterate the story told by Bath-Sheba. Their ~~desires~~ prevailed and David said, "let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him there king over Israel." (I kings 1:34) It was thus that Nathan was instrumental in getting Solomon anointed king of Israel.



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Hence we have another prophet whose political influence was powerful enough to change the whole course of the kingship and to get one man annointed king in place of one who already had one foot on the throne ready to ascend and assume control.

#### D GAD

In Gad we have a representative of the conservative characteristic of the early prophets. (1) Today the taking of a census is a customary thing but in the time of David it was a complete innovation without divine sanction. Consequently we find the prophet Gad exerting his influence to show David that such a thing was wrong. (II Samuel 24:11-17). Knowing prophecy it is not strange to see that the prophet Gad would interfere when he thought that David was resting too much upon his own power and not enough on God. The strangeness of it comes in the fact that he did not interfere until after the census was taken when he told of the pestilence that was to befall the land because of the action taken.

When the pestilence arrived upon Israel we see the real political power that he could exert. "And Gad came that day to David, and said unto him, Go up, rear an altar unto Jehovah in the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite."

(II Samuel 24:18) In no uncertain terms he tells David what is expected of him and without questioning the king hastens to comply "And David went up according to the saying of Gad, as Jehovah commanded." ( II Samuel 24:19) Here then we see

(1) Knudson, A. C.: The Prophetic Movement in Israel p. 34



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the prophet's word being accepted by the king as authority coming from Jehovah and carrying such weight that even the king hastened to comply when he had spoken.

#### E- Ahijah

Both Ahijah and Shemaiah show prophetic dissatisfaction with the reign of Solomon. Ahijah was the one who stirred up the revolt of Jeroboam (I Kings 11:26-40). Putting on a new garment he tore it into twelve pieces and gave Jeroboam ten of them signifying in this symbolic manner the division of the power of Solomon. When Solomon heard of this and attempted to kill Jeroboam the political career of Ahijah came to an end. Jeroboam had to flee to Egypt and Ahijah is lost from sight.

#### F- Shemaiah

Shemaiah is credited as having intercepted Rehoboam in his plan to reconquer the seceding tribes (I Kings 12:21-24). "But the word of God came unto Shemaiah the man of God, saying, speak unto Rehoboam the son of Solomon, king of Judah, and unto all the house of Judah and Benjamin, and to the rest of the people saying, Thus saith Jehovah, Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel .... So they hearkened unto the word of Jehovah." (I Kings 12:22-24) The political influence which he had was to save Israel by talking with the opposition.



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## F1- False Prophets

The so-called "false prophets" are representatives of a "lower type of prophecy, which, like true prophecy, began with the fusion of national and ethical interests, but which, unlike true prophecy, allowed the national to predominate over the ethical." (1) While it is true that these false prophets were primarily interested in nationalism their effect upon it was not nearly as great as that of the true prophets.

The rise of false prophets in the ranks is only what one would expect in a human institution of that nature. Since they were largely dependent upon others for their support there was a great tendency to "prophecy smooth things" to those who were supporting them. They were ready to say that peace would come to those who gave them food and clothing while war was prepared for those who did not (Mic. 3:5).

This does not mean to say that all of these known as "false prophets" were actually that. In the case of the four hundred court prophets of Ahab with whom Micaiah came into conflict is this particularly true. Micaiah said that they were inspired by Yahweh to tell a lie (I Kings 22:19-23). All they could see was the fact that Ramoth-Gilead, an Israelitish town, was in the hands of the Syrians and should be recovered. (2)

The false prophets which followed in the succeeding generations were of the same general stamp. Their political advice was practically worthless for they merely found out what the leaders intended to do and told them to do it. They merely added religious color to the political status quo.

(1) Knudson, A.C.: Beacon Lights of Prophecy p.10

(2) Smith, J.M.P.: The Prophets and Their Times p.36



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- (1) E. H. Rieu, A. C.: Reason and Prophecy, p. 10.
- (2) Smith, L. M. P.: The Prophecy and Their Times, p. 25.



G- JEHU

The chief claim which Jehu has to distinction in the political realm is the fact of his severe denunciation of everything and everyone who had anything to do with the house of Baasha who was king at the time. (I Kings 16:1-4)

H- MICAIAH

"Micaiah deserves to be remembered as the first prophet who was forced to stand his ground against a group of false prophets." (1) Ahab, the king of Israel, and Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, were together discussing the likelihood of joining forces and taking Ramoth-Gilead from Syria. They had gathered together four hundred of the court prophets, including Zedekiah to counsel them, and they said as one man, "Go up, for the Lord will deliver it into the hand of the king" (I Kings 22:6). Jehoshaphat was not satisfied with such unanimity and called for "A prophet of Jehovah". The name of Micaiah was then mentioned and they sent for him. His message was the exact opposite of the one given by the court prophets for when he predicted the defeat of Israel and of Judah he was thrown into prison. (I Kings 22:27) Although his word was not heeded by the kings it is significant to note that later history bore him out in the prediction which he had been so bold as to make. He rose far above those who maintained their personal comfort by compromising their message. He exerted but slight political power but



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# E-MICAH

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great insight. His theme was ever, "As Jehovah liveth, what Jehovah saith, unto me, that will I speak." (I Kings 22:14)

### I. ELIJAH

The negotiation of marriage between Ahab, the king of Israel (875-854 B.C.) and Jezebel brought the friendship of Phoenicia (1) but it also brought the problem of Baal worship into Israel (2) . It was the latter fact that brought into prominence, Elijah, the greatest of the preliterate prophets. (3)

When Ahab married Jezebel he permitted her to establish a service of worship for Baal but had no intention of giving up the worship of Jehovah. This, however, was differently construed by Elijah. He saw in the advent of Baalism a distinct reversion from Jehovah worship and a thing which could not be condoned in Israel. (I Kings 18:21) Because of his complete faith in Yahweh and contempt for Baalism he appeared before king Ahab to demand that the issue be cleared by a contest of the power of Yahweh and Baal. (I Kings 18:19). With perfect fearlessness he denounced Ahab as a forsaker of Yahweh and follower of the Baalim (I Kings 18:18) and demanded that all the priests of Baal be gathered together on Mount Carmel. When they had assembled he caused them to build an altar under which no fire was placed in order allow the gods to ignite it. He did likewise and when their gods failed to

(1) Peritz, C. J.: Old Testament History p. 168

(2) Robertson-Smith, W.: The Prophets of Israel p. 77

(3) Ibid., p.37



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(1) Barthe, G. L.: Old Testament History p. 168  
(2) Robertson-Smith, W.: The Prophets of Israel p. 77  
(3) Ibid., p. 87



respond he called upon Yahweh who ignited the fire and consumed the sacrifice. (I Kings 18:38)

In another instance Elijah showed his insight into the national situation. Ahab desired a certain vineyard that belonged to Naboth. Not being able to trade another vineyard for it nor to buy it he acquired it through an insidious plot of Jezebel's in which she had Naboth killed. (I Kings 21:5-16) Through this Elijah saw and was able to make others see that the poor and unprotected were the recipients of great wrongs at the hands of the more powerful. He was by no means slow in denouncing these wrongs which were so evident to him. He told Ahab that, "In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood." (I Kings 21-29) In this act of denunciation Elijah was blazing a new trail of social justice. (1) Through his influence the people of Israel "began to feel that he was pleading the cause of the ancient freedoms of Israel against a personal despotism." (2) Elijah is then <sup>going</sup> ~~given~~ further afield than social justice. He is bringing to bear the whole political inheritance of Israel upon Ahab to prevent his usurpation of too much power. He has then not only flown in the face of the wrath of the king and his wicked, scheming queen but has also put restrictions on the power of the king. It cannot be denied that his method was efficacious for "it came to pass, when Ahab heard those words, that he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted and lay in sackcloth, and went softly". (I Kings 21-27)

- (1) Leslie, E. A., Old Testament Prophets, Class notes Oct. 1932  
 (2) Robertson-Smith, W. The Prophets of Israel p. 77



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In another instance is the political influence of Elijah seen even more clearly than in the previous ones. Although he had shown the majority of the people that Yahweh was God and had shown Ahab that his actions had been wrong he had also incurred the wrath of Jezebel the queen. As a consequence of this he was forced to flee to the wilderness. (I Kings 19:3-4) While there he had a great religious experience which resulted in the fact of his going out to anoint "Hazael to be king over Syria; and Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel." (I Kings 19,16) The actual acts of anointing these two men were not accomplished by Elijah himself but were left to his successor Elisha whom he called from following the plow (I kings 19:19) "Elijah does not himself seem to have accomplished much in the way of external reform. This task he committed to his successor Elisha who was a man of more practical turn of mind." (1) It is not always the more evident things of an external nature that are the most important. We cannot discredit the work of Elijah because he did not instigate any definite reforms. He planted the seeds that germinated and were left for others ~~se~~ to harvest.

We have noticed three particular times in which he executed his influence for the better<sup>ment</sup> of political conditions. In his satirical denunciation of Baal worship he unified Israel by upholding one God. By his severe criticism of Ahab in regard to Naboth's vineyard he blazed a new trail of social justice which affected the whole political strata.

(1) Ibid., p. 19



In other instances is the political influence of Elijah seen even more clearly than in the previous ones. Although he had shown the majority of the people that Yaweh was God and had shown Ahab that his actions had been wrong he had also incurred the wrath of Jezebel the queen. As a consequence of this he was forced to flee to the wilderness. (I Kings 19:3-4) While there he had a great religious experience which resulted in the fact of his going out to anoint "Hazael to be king over Syria; and Jehu the son of Nimshi shall thou anoint to be king over Israel." (I Kings 19:16) The actual acts of anointing these two men were not accomplished by Elijah himself but were left to his successor Elisha whom he called from following the plow (I Kings 19:19) "Elijah does not himself seem to have accomplished much in the way of external reform. This task he committed to his successor Elisha who was a man of more practical turn of mind." (1) It is not always the more evident things of an external nature that are the most important. We cannot discredit the work of Elijah because he did not institute any definite reforms. He planted the seeds that germinated and were left for others to harvest.

We have noticed three particular times in which he executed his influence for the better of political conditions. In his satirical denunciation of Baal worship he unified Israel by upholding one God. By his severe criticism of Ahab in regard to Naboth's vineyard he planted a new ideal of social justice which affected the whole political attitude



Through Elisha then he started a political intrigue which resulted in the revolution of Jehu. Through it all Elijah was more than one who was interested solely in the nation. His scope of vision was wider and higher. "Had Elijah been merely a patriot, to whom the state stood above every other consideration, he would have condoned the faults of a king who did so much for the greatness of his nation; but the things for which Elijah contended were of far more worth than the national existence of Israel..... Judged from a mere political point of view Elijah's work had no other result than to open a way for the bloody and unscrupulous ambition of Jehu, and lay bare the frontiers of the land to the ravages of the ferocious Haza<sup>z</sup>ael; but with him the religion of Jehovah had already reached a point where it could no longer be judged by a merely national standard and the truths of which he was the champion were not the less true because the issue made it plain that the cause of Jehovah could not triumph without destroying the old Hebrew state." (1) The political influence which Elijah wielded, then, transcended national boundaries and justifies us in saying that "Elijah is the high point of preliterate prophecy." (2)

#### J- ELISHA

It is possible to look at Elijah in the few grand and impressive scenes in which he participated but the long career of Elisha is marked by innumerable deeds of mercy. After the call of Elisha by Elijah (I Kings 19:19) the two

- (1) Robertson-Smith, W. : The Prophets of Israel p. 78-79  
 (2) Knudson, A. C.: The Beacon Lights of Prophecy p. 19



Through Eliah then he started a political intrigue which resulted in the revolution of Jehu. Through it all Eliah was more than one who was interested solely in the nation. His scope of vision was wider and higher. "Had Eliah been merely a patriot, to whom the state stood above every other consideration, he would have condoned the faults of a king who did so much for the greatness of his nation; but the things for which Eliah contended were of far more worth than the national existence of Israel. . . . Judged from a mere political point of view Eliah's work had no other result than to open a way for the bloody and unscrupulous ambition of Jehu, and lay bare the frontiers of the land to the ravages of the ferocious Hittites; but with him the religion of Jehovah had already reached a point where it could no longer be judged by a merely national standard and the terms of which he was the champion were not the less true because the issue made it plain that the cause of Jehovah could not triumph without destroying the old Hebrew state." (1) The political influence which Eliah wielded, then, transcended national boundaries and justified us in saying that "Eliah is the high point of prophetic prophecy." (2)

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It is possible to look at Eliah in the few grand and impressive scenes in which he participated but the long career of Eliah is marked by innumerable deeds of mercy. After the call of Eliah by Elijah (I Kings 19:10) the two

(1) Robertson-Smith, W.: The Prophets of Israel, p. 18-19.  
 (2) Knudson, A. C.: The Beacon Lights of Prophecy, p. 19.



seem to have been together for six or seven years (I Kings 22:1 II Kings 1:17). During this time Elijah would have sufficient time to instill into the mind of Elisha most of his political and religious ideas. This was evidently carried on to good advantage for Elisha is considered as the spiritual successor of Elijah (3) and is very active in the politics of his time. Both in private and in public life his activity was incessant.

The method of Elisha in regard to the political situation was quite different from that employed by Elijah. While Elijah had been called the "troubler of Israel" (I Kings 18:17) Elisha was accepted in palaces as a friend and counsellor and was addressed as "father" by kings (II Kings 6:21; 13-4). Various stories are told about him which reveal the great influence which he had upon public life. In one case he was with the confederate armies of Israel in a campaign against Moab. (II Kings 3:11-20) When the armies were perishing he saved their morale by predicting that water would fill the trenches which he had ordered to be dug. At another time he was thought by the Syrian enemies of Israel to be the real cause of their defeat so they sent a strong force of horses and chariots to capture him (II Kings 6:14). At still another time Elisha saved the political situation by his implicit faith in Jehovah. (II Kings 6:24ff) The city of Samaria was so sorely besieged that the king wished to capitulate but Elisha would not hear of it but rather predicted a miraculous deliverance.

(1) Hastings, A Dictionary of the Bible Vol. I p. 693



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The prophecy was fulfilled and the prophet vindicated.

One of the last things which Elijah commissioned Elisha to do was to anoint Hazael to be king of Syria and Jehu king of Israel. When, therefore, Elisha heard of the mortal sickness of Benhadad he knew that the time had come for this to be done. (II Kings 8:7ff) Going then to Damascus he informed Hazael of the mission which he was to perform. This he did although he realized that he was anointing the man who would scourge Israel. (II Kings 8-12)

"The chief business of Elisha's life is to avenge the crimes and apostasy of the house of Ahab. The mission to anoint Jehu king over Israel which Elijah did not live to fulfil, must be carried out by his successor." (1) During a war between Israel and Syria, Joram king of Israel (853-843 B. C.) was wounded. While he was absent convalescing and Ahaziah (842B.C.) his Judean ally had gone to visit him Elisha sent one of the sons of the prophets to secretly anoint Jehu king of Israel. This was done and when his fellow officers discovered that it had been done they immediately proclaimed him king (II Kings 9:13).

From all this it is <sup>quite</sup> ~~very~~ evident that Elisha was held in very high regard in political as well as religious circles. His influence was great enough to save the nation in several crises and to him is directly traceable the ascension of two kings, the one of Syria and the other of Israel. To have divorced Elisha from Israel would have been

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(1) Hastings: A Dictionary of the Bible Vol. I, p. 555.  
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to deprive him of his chief interest in life and at the same time would have deprived the nation of one of her most important political and religious leaders of the time.

#### IV The Eighth Century Prophets

##### A- Historical Background

When the prophets Elijah and Elisha were finally able to put Jehu upon the throne of Israel (842 B.C.) they undoubtedly thought that he would work to purify religion. At first he did not disappoint them for he unmercifully destroyed the worship of Baal and the idolatrous dynasty of Omri. In the end, however, Jehu proved to be little more than an unscrupulous adventurer who took every opportunity to advance his own interests. Although he had rooted out Baalism he replaced it with the half-heathenish bull worship which was introduced by Jeroboam I (933-912 B.C.).(1) It was under him also that a great political dissemination began. Hazael and the Syrian forces began an encroachment upon Israel which resulted in the loss of much territory (II Kings 10:32-33). These misfortunes continued under his successor Jehoahaz (819-798 B.C.) (II Kings 13:3,7) to the point where Israel seemed on the verge of destruction. Under the reign of Joash or Jehoash (798-783 B.C.) however, things began to take a turn for the better. Jeroboam II (783-733 B.C.) continued this and carried

(1) Eiselen, F.C.: Prophecy and the Prophets p. 35



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it even farther. Under him Israel recovered all of the territory that had been lost and even captured Damascus (II Kings 14:23-29). Israel was now a kingdom which nearly attained the size and grandeur of the kingdom of David and was the ruling nation between the Nile and Euphrates. (1)

#### B- AMOS

Bécause the people realized that they were in a period of prosperity they began to act accordingly. Luxury and wastefulness were indulged to the full. "The rich lay on couches of ivory with damask cushions; daily they slew a fattened calf, drank the most costly wines, and annointed themselves with precious oils. All in all, it was a period in which to live was a joy." (2)

Like a thunderbolt out of the clear sky came Amos upon this scene with his tremendous message of inevitable doom.

A great feast was in progress in Bethel about 760 B. C. when an unknown plain looking man forced his way through the merry-makers. (3) The divine fire in his eye brooked no interference and the people fell instinctively away to give him room. Instead of adding anything to the levity of the occasion he broke out into a funeral dirge over Israel.

"The virgin of Israel is fallen,

She shall no more rise

(1) Cornill, C. H.: The Prophets of Israel p. 39

(2) Ibid., p. 38

(3) Ottley, R.L.: A Short History of the Hebrews p. 187



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(1) Cornill, C. W.: The Prophecy of Amos p. 39  
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(3) Orlay, R. L.: A Short History of the Hebrews p. 187



She is forsaken upon her land,

There is none to raise her up." (Amos 5:2)

This man Amos, "is one of the most arresting figures appearing on the stage of Jewish history. He suddenly emerges from obscurity, exercises his ministry for a brief period in the full glare of publicity, and then vanishes from the scene. But before he passes from our view he has executed an influence upon the life and thought of the people never to be destroyed. He is the pioneer of a new era in the evolution of the religion of Israel, and he is the father of Hebrew prophecy as far as it has taken the form of literature." (1)

Amos did not belong to the recognized order of the prophets and emphatically denies any connection with them.

"I was no prophet, neither was I one of the sons of the prophets; but I was a herdsman, and a dresser of sycamore trees."

(Amos 7:14) He was rather as he has said a shepherd and one who cultivated the sycamore tree. His home was in Tekoa (Amos 1:1) which is a little town about twelve miles south of Jerusalem in a lonely and desolate region. (2) It is beyond doubt that such a rugged territory had its influence upon his character. He was familiar with the roar of the lion as it sprung upon a lamb that had strayed from the flock (Amos 3:4). He knew what it was to rescue "two legs or a piece of an ear" after such a marauding expedition (Amos 3:12). Such a life was a natural background for a strong and fearless man, possessing an unerring eye for

(1) Thorne, G.W.: The Prophets of Israel and Their Message for Today p.187

(2) Ibid., p. 30



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(1) Thorne, G.W.: The Prophets of Israel and Their Messages  
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(2) Ibid., p. 20



the facts of a situation and an unhesitating vigor in dealing with them. Such a life moulded not only his character but his thought as well. "No one can read his book without feeling that he haunted heights, and lived in the face of very wide horizons. The cold wind that blows off the hills often after sunset; through a gap the Dead Sea, with its heavy mists; beyond the gulf the range of Moab, cold and grey, till the sun leaps from behind his barrier and in a moment the world of hill-tops below Tekoa is flooded with the light ---- that was the landscape of Amos." (1)

The message of Amos is by no means in keeping with the festival occasion at which he seems to have started. No lovely messages of hope are for him, but rather a grim and terrible note of impending doom. His keynote is more, "I saw the Lord standing beside the altar and He said, Smite" (Amos 9:1)

From the very first Amos set himself against the political situation as he saw it in existence. He saw Jehovah standing over a wall with a plumb-line in his hand judging the nations. "Behold I will set a plumb-line in the midst of my people Israel; I will not again pass by them any more; and the high places of Isaac shall be desolate, and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste; and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword." (Amos 7,8-9) The people were not unfamiliar with prophecy directed against the king for it was thus that dynasties had largely been changed in the past, so when Amaziah, the high priest, heard this he

(1) Smith, G. A.: Historical Geography of the Holy Land p.315



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immediately took alarm and sent word to the king. It is significant to note the importance which he lays upon the words of Amos and enables us to see the mighty influence that his words had. "Then Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent to Jeroboam king of Israel, saying, Amos hath conspired against thee in the midst of the house of Israel; the land is not able to bear all his words." (Amos 7:10).

His political thunderbolt seems to have been shot with the first explosion for he was immediately ordered by Amaziah to leave the Northern country and go back to the hills of Judah from which he had come. "O thou seer, go, flee thou away into the land of Judah and there eat bread, and prophesy there: but prophesy not again any more at Bethel." (Amos 7:12-13) "Amos, no doubt was compelled to yield at once to superior force" (1) but that does not by any means put a stop to his political influence. In fact, his greatest power had not yet been achieved. Being forced to leave the country to which he had been sent by Jehovah he committed to writing those things which were uppermost in his mind.

In the first chapter of the book of Amos we see the stormy prophet announcing the doom upon the nations. It is easy to imagine the delight which his hearers would show when he was saying, "For three transgressions yea, for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof," and as long as he confined his denunciations to Damascus, Gaza, Phoenicia, Edom,

(1) Robertson-Smith, W: The Prophetsof Israel p. 125



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(1) Robertson-Smith, W: The Prophets of Israel p. 123



Ammon, Moab and Judah their enemies. The story is quite different, however when he breaks out in denunciation against Israel. "For three transgressions of Israel, yea, for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they have sold the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes -- they that pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor, and turn aside the way of the meek: and a man and his father go unto the same maiden, to profane my holy name: and they lay themselves down beside every altar upon clothes taken in pledge; and in the house of their God they drink the wine of such as have been fined." (Amos 2:6-8)

It is thus the social wrongs of the nation that are bringing the terrible judgement to pass. "It was the great merit of Amos that he insisted upon fundamental morality as the supreme thing in human relations with God. There was no lack of ritualistic splendor in Israel; but in the eyes of Amos this was little better than an insult to Yahweh so long as justice was not operative between man and man." (1) This is clearly illustrated in the message of Amos to those coming to the high place to worship. "Come to Bethel, and transgress; to Gilgal and multiply transgression; and bring your sacrifices every morning and your tithes every three days; and offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving of that which is leavened, and proclaim freewill offerings and publish them: for this pleaseth you, O ye children of Israel, saith the Lord Jehovah. (Amos 4: 4-5) Here he is not only denouncing the social order in which

(1) Smith, J. M. P: The Prophets and Their Times p. 47



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the rich were using all kinds of methods to get the better of the poor but is also denouncing the type of worship that was prevalent. In other passages he becomes even more caustic in his treatment. "I hate, I despise your feasts, and I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Yea, though ye offer me your burnt-offerings and meal-offerings, I will not accept them; neither will I regard the peace-offerings of your fat beasts. Take thou away from me the noise of their songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. But let justice roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream." (Amos 5:21-24)

In still another regard the message of Amos was in direct opposition to the prevailing thought of his age. His contemporaries were all interested in the expectation of the coming Day of Yahweh but for them it was the dawn of a New Age in which all the hopes and aims of Israel were to be realized. (1) For Amos, however, it was an entirely different thing. "Woe unto you that desire the day of Jehovah! Wherefore would ye have the day of Jehovah? It is darkness and not light. As if a man did flee from a lion<sup>on</sup>, and a bear met him; or went into a house and leaned his hand on the wall and a serpent bit him" (Amos 5:18-19). It was on this day of Yahweh that all of the judgment of Yahweh was going to come to pass.

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(1) Ibid., p. 53



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While we cannot accurately delve into the thought life of Amos we can know that his political as well as religious



eye was continually on the watch. For him the two ideas could not be separated and so he interpreted politics in terms of religion. "The great fact which loomed up in Amos' political field of vision was the coming Assyrian invasion. The great world-power was like a black storm-cloud on the horizon. The common people or even the nobles might ignore it. They might suppose that with the humiliation of Damascas, the Great King had reached the limit of his power, and that they themselves were beyond the reach of his arm. Amos could not so judge .

..... All that could save the people of Yahweh was a special intervention of Yahweh himself. Had Israel any reason to hope for such a special intervention? Amos in all honesty and sincerity could find no such ground. Moral corruption, disobedience to the plain demands of conscience, man's inhumanity to man, deadness to moral issues .... these were features of the situation that stared him in the face. Hence his almost despairing denunciation of punishment."(1)

The political influence which Amos had then, in particular was his emphatic insistence that nations must conform to the moral standard in order to live. Beyond and above all things else he laid stress upon this idea.

#### C- HOSEA

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G. HOSBA

"As one studies the prophets of Israel in the light of modern times, two facts seem to emerge more clearly than ever before: First, that these men are speaking to a nation



rather than to persons; and, second, that each of them has a distinctive mission and message.

The prophet Hosea, illustrates these statements. For Hosea the nation is the object of concern. Ephraim is a unit and can be somewhat described as a whole by a single designation. Its social and religious conditions are national problems. Like many other prophets, Hosea deals directly with the political questions of his day ..... the chaotic government, the inadequate public leadership, the futile chauvinism and fickle diplomacy that marked the decadence of the Hebrew monarchies." (1)

Hosea, who was a younger contemporary of Amos, shows in almost every respect a marked contrast to him. They are both animated by the idea that they have a divine message to deliver and both are governed by a strong moral purpose. They are however, "in almost every other respect as different as men could be. Amos is the stern moralist; Hosea is the man of religious affection. Amos sees the righteous will of Yahweh pronouncing and executing judgment upon Israel; Hosea has a vision of the loving heart of Yahweh grieving over His erring children. The temperament of the men is different and their experiences in life bring the difference into high relief." (2) While Amos came from Judah to announce doom upon Israel, Hosea is faced with the circumstance of prophesying doom to the nation which is his own and which he loves very much.

The ever recurring theme of love in the book of Hosea is best typified by his own personal experience. He married a

(1) Cadbury, H. J.: National Ideals in the Old Testament p. 113

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(1) Gabbary, H. L.: National Ideals in the Old Testament p. 113  
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woman who proved to be unworthy to him. She strayed from him following her immoral practices until she fell into slavery. He redeemed her from slavery and appealed to her with the wooing love of their first romance. "The prophetic significance of the marriage is clear. Israel, the bride of Yahweh, is disloyal and unworthy of Yahweh's great love. Therefore she must go into exile away from the presence of Yahweh until she learns the worth of Yahweh's love and longs for renewed fellowship with him. But after this period of exile, she will be brought back home and given a new chance. So that from the very beginning of Hosea's prophetic career, he evidently preached both punishment and deliverance." (1)

One of the primary causes which Hosea sees for the unfaithfulness of Israel was the worship practices of the people. Amos had rejected the cultus because he was impressed with the worthlessness of all ritual. He nowhere intimates that Israel's worship was offered to any but Israel's God. Hosea, on the other hand, asserts that it has as its object, not Yahweh, but Baal. (2) His conception of Yahweh was too spiritual to permit him to be represented in any human or animal form. He cast derision upon the idea that men by their own hands could make God. (Hosea 8:6; 14:3) With all of the scorn which he is capable he characterizes the worship as "men kissing calves" (Hosea 13:2)

The religious defection which Hosea discovered in the popular religion was accompanied by an equally bad moral

(1) Smith, J. M. P.: The Prophets and Their Times p. 59

(2) Smith, H. P.: Old Testament History p. 222



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(1) Smith, J. M. F.: The Prophets and Their Times p. 52  
(2) Smith, H. P.: Old Testament History p. 222



defection. There is no knowledge of what Yahweh is like (Hosea 4:6). False swearing, murder, theft, adultery, and violence are seen on every hand. (Hosea 5:11,12; 4:14; 5:4; 6:6; 8:9) The land is in a terrible situation and it is largely due to the priests and prophets who have led the people into sin. (Hosea 5:1) It is not strange to find him laying the guilt upon the religious leaders. They were the ones who should have been the spiritual leaders and instead of that they have led the people into sin. Under the name of religion all kinds of abominations have been practiced. From all of this we see that Hosea conceived of these things as responsible for the political calamity which was approaching. Hosea represented Israel as the mercenary woman who says, "I will go after my lovers, who give me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, my oil and my wine." (Hosea 2:5)

Hosea was living in the midst of troubled times following the death of Jeroboam. One king followed another in rapid succession. The air was surcharged with conspiracy all of the time. He expected vengeance to be wrecked upon the house of Jehu for the massacre by Jehu at Jezreel. "I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and will cause the kingdom of the house of Israel to cease." (Hosea 1:4) With great fearlessness he declared that the ruling kings were not the proper ones to be ruling and that they had been set up under false pretenses. "They have set up kings, but not by me; they have made princes, and I knew



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it not." (Hosea 8:4) Seeing the terrible sensuality of their conduct he boldly denounced it in unequivocal terms .... "They make the kind glad with their wickedness, and the princes with their lies. They are all adulterers; they are as an oven heated by the baker; he ceaseth to stir the fire, from the kneading of the dough, until it be leavened. On the day of our king the princes made themselves sick with the heat of wine; he stretched out his hand with the scoffers. For they have made ready their heart like an oven, while they lie in wait, their baker sleepeth all the night; in the morning it burneth as a flaming fire. They are all hot as an oven, and devour their judges; all their kings are fallen; there is none among them that calleth unto me." (Hosea 7:3-7) Because of all this he saw Israel as being taken away captive into Assyria. "It also shall be carried unto Assyria for a present to King Jareb." (Hosea 10:6) "They shall not dwell in Jehovah's land; but Ephraim shall return to Egypt; and they shall eat unclean food in Assyria." (Hosea 9:3)

Hosea abhorred the foolish political intrigues which were evident on every hand. He was especially repulsed by the unprincipled alliances which were being sought with both Egypt and Assyria. "Ephraim is like a silly dove, without understanding; they call unto Egypt, they go to Assyria" (Hosea 7:11) Sometimes the policy of Israel's dependence upon Assyria was dominant; but when the burden of such support became too heavy their interest turned to Egypt. Such a policy



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of vacillation was not only bad statesmanship but was a distinct evidence of disloyalty to Yahweh (Hosea 7:15) Such alliances always involved some sort of formal acknowledgement of the god or gods of the allied power. It is only natural then that Hosea would vigorously protest such an alliance.

The prophet Hosea, as with all of the other prophets though motivated by religious causes was by no means blind to the actual political situations which faced the nation. Interpreting solely from the words that the prophets have left one would be inclined to think that they arrived at their political conclusions through religious revelations and special insight. It is not intended to disparage this part of their life for it was doubtless efficacious but it is adding to our conception of them to see that they were able to read religious principles into a political situation which was apparent to them. Both points of view are necessary.

The political outlook at the time of Hosea was rapidly growing worse for Israel and justified his gloomiest forebodings. (1) After a period of comparative inactivity Assyria was beginning to reassert itself under Tiglath-Pileser III (B.C. 745-727). Whether or not Egypt was already acting cannot positively be made out, but it seems that the Egyptians kept a close watch upon the country of the Nile from a very early date. (2) Whenever Egypt was threatened it was her natural policy to use Palestine as a buffer and at times it actively enlisted it in her service. It is natural then to

(1) Smith, H.P.: Old Testament History p. 225

(2) Ibid., -p. 227



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expect to find Hosea talking about an Egyptian alliance being agitated in Israel about this time. Such was the political situation which was brewing at the time of Hosea and which he predicted would result in the downfall and deportation of Israel. The eventual outcome justified him in his position but what immediate results were obtained in Israel we cannot accurately determine except that despite all his warnings "the unthinking mass of the people led by the worthless kings false prophets, corrupt statesmen, and unscrupulous priests was irrevocably doomed. The Assyrian army, the instrument of Jehovah's righteous vengeance, was already on its way." (1)

#### D- ISAIAH

"The early years of Isaiah were passed in a blaze of national prosperity." (2) Jeroboam II of Israel had taken from Syria the frontier towns of Gilead and even part of the territory of Damascus. At the same time Uzziah of Judah had been victorious over the Philistines, Arabs, and Edomites, recovering from the latter the seaport of Elath. With all of this military success came wealth and luxury. Evidences of prosperity were on every hand apparent. "In the eyes of his subjects, therefore, Uzziah must have appeared a second Solomon, predestined to restore the shattered fortunes of Judah. But when they looked to see the crown placed on his glory, "the Lord smote the king with leprosy and his reign closed in darkness and depression (740 B. C.)." (3)

- (1) Ottley, R. L.: Short History of the Hebrews p. 188
- (2) Gordon, A. R.: The Faith of Isaiah p. 11
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It is only natural to suppose that the death of such a ruler in a lazar-house would have a great effect upon the young man Isaiah. It is indeed with the expression of that fact that he begins the story of his vision and call to the prophetic ministry. "In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up" (Isa. 6:1). Isaiah saw more than merely the death of the leader in the tragic end that came to Uzziah. It is more than likely that he could see in the history of the kingdom of Samaria an ominous warning of the troubles that might follow the removal of a capable ruler at such a time. He probably saw that the death of this king would be a prelude to the anarchy and confusion such as he afterward pictured as part of the divine judgment on Israel.

Of the life of Isaiah we know more than we do of Amos or Hosea because of his political importance. He not only refers to himself more frequently than did the others but there are references to him in the book of Kings. (II Kings 19,20). He was a native of Judah and lived in the capital city of Jerusalem. From the fact that he mingled freely with the leaders at court it has been inferred that he was a noble birth. (1) Whether or not this can be taken as conclusive evidence "his whole conduct and bearing make it certain that he was of high social rank" (2) He was married and had two sons to whom he gave the symbolic names of Shear-jashub, "a remnant shall return" (7:3) and Maher-shalal-hash-

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(1) Knudson, A. C.: The Reasoning of Prophecy p. 127  
(2) Elisei, F. C.: Prophecy and the Prophets p. 73



baz"; "swift-booty-speedy-prey" (8:3). In these names two important aspects of the prophet's teaching were expressed. He caused his whole family to contribute to the prophetic cause.

So closely and intimately connected was the ministry of Isaiah to the history of the nation that we must first get some conception of the nature of the latter. Upon the death of Uzziah in 740 B.C. Jotham came to the throne and ruled for perhaps five years. He was succeeded in 735 B.C. by Ahaz who reigned sixteen years. Hezekiah followed him reigning about 719 to 686 B.C. At this same time there were four Assyrian kings -- Tiglathpileser III (747-727 B.C.), Shalmaneser V (727-722 B.C.), Sargon II (722-705 B.C.), and Sennacherib (705-681 B.C.). (1)

In back of practically all of the political maneuvers which Judah made from the time that Isaiah came upon the scenes stood this great prophet. "That Jerusalem and Judah did not share the fate of Samaria and Israel, but prolonged their existence for over a century and a quarter longer is in great measure due to the influence of the prophet Isaiah. (2) R.L.Ottley has characterized the work and influence of Isaiah as follows: "Ahaz the son of Jotham was still a youth when he succeeded to the throne, and possessed neither the strength of character nor the political capacity to deal with the momentous questions of foreign policy which were raised by the hostile schemes of Pekah and Rezin, and the threatening movements of Assyria. This weak,

(1) Knudson, A.C.: Beacon Lights of Prophecy p.131

(2) Peritz, I.J.: Old Testament History p. 199



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petulant, and unprincipled king was however not destitute of guidance. Beside the throne stood the commanding figure of the great patriot and prophet Isaiah, perhaps after Moses, the <sup>most</sup> striking personality in Hebrew history. Without holding any official position, Isaiah was actively engaged during a ministry of forty years in directing and controlling the policy of his country and indeed, the closing period of the eighth century was a critical epoch in which such guidance was urgently needed. It is unquestionable in any case that if the existence of the kingdom of Judah was prolonged for yet another century and a half this result was mainly due to the energy and foresight of Isaiah." (1)

Previous to the Syro-Ephraimites war which came in 734 B. C. the preaching of Isaiah was largely a continuation and repetition of the message of his predecessors, Amos and Hosea. (2) With the approach of this invasion, however came a new aspect of the social and political situation. Jotham had refused to join the coalition started by Rezin, king of Syria, and Pekah king of Israel, to combat the approaching peril of Assyria. When he refused the two other nations determined to subdue Judah before facing Assyria. Jotham very conveniently died (II Kings 15:37) leaving his son Ahaz to uphold the honor of the state. Being a weak and effeminate ruler Ahaz was so frightened at the prospect of a war with these two countries that he hastened to put Judah under the protection of Assyria. Against such an alliance Isaiah pitted

(1) Ottley, R. L.: A Short History of the Hebrews p. 193

(2) Smith, J. M. P.: The Prophets and Their Times p. 69



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himself with all the vigor of his personality. Ahaz in anticipation of the threatened siege of the city was out inspecting the water supply when Isaiah accompanied by his small son Shear-jashab encountered him. With unequivocal words Isaiah predicted the downfall of the two northern kingdoms and warned Ahaz not to rely upon external authority but upon Yahweh. "Say ye not, a conspiracy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be in dread thereof. Jehovah of hosts, him shall ye sanctify; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread." (Isa. 8:12-13). It is interesting to note that in the symbolic action of taking Shear-jashub, "a remnant-shalt return" with him in meeting Ahaz he is not thinking only of the dire consequences which will come as a result of this action but also of the more optimistic note of the hope that he places in the few who will come back from the exile. It is quite evident that Ahaz has already made up his mind in the matter and has perhaps even made some advances to Assyria for he will not be convinced by the arguments that Isaiah put forward. So confident is Isaiah that Jehovah is in back of him in what will happen he tells Ahaz to ask a sign of Jehovah if he is uncertain as to what will happen. Ahaz refuses saying that he will not tempt Jehovah in such a manner.

This meeting took place about the close of the year 735 B. C. The prophecy which Isaiah had made and the course of action which he advised were far better than the policy which Ahaz pursued for "within the year the hosts of Tiglath-



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pileser had swept over Gilead, Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali ravaging and depopulating making a solitude and calling it peace. (1) For two years Tiglathpileser and the Assyrian forces besieged Damascus and were finally successful in being able to take it, sack the city, execute Rezin the king, and deport the people to Kir (II Kings 16:9) Ahaz was rid of the menace of his northern foe but he paid the terrible price of having "riveted upon his kingdom the heavy yoke of the great heathen empire." (2)

When neither Ahaz nor the people of Judah would listen to him the prophet Isaiah seems to have disappeared from public life for awhile and from this seclusion comes the great literary monument which we have from his hand. He expresses himself thus: "Bind thou up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples. And I will wait for Jehovah, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him. (Isa. 8:16-17).

This self imposed seclusion did not last long, however, for when Ahaz died (720 B.C.) and his more courageous son Hezekiah ascended the throne a new political crisis drew out the energies of Isaiah. Early in the reign of Hezekiah a party formed to throw off the yoke of Assyria and join forces with Egypt in combination with Philistia, Edom, and Moab, (Isa. 20) Judging from the vigorous way in which Isaiah had protested any alliance with Assyria it would seem that he would be <sup>the</sup> ~~his~~ first to sanction a revolt from them. Quite

- (1) Gordon, R. R.: The Prophets of the Old Testament p. 113  
 (2) Ottley, R. L.: A Short History of the Hebrews ;. 194



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the contrary is true. Once under Assyrian domination he greatly protested any intrigues that would involve a break with them. In order to emphasize his opinion in this regard he walked three years through the streets of Jerusalem clad as a captive, barefoot and almost naked. "We get some idea of the complete abandon, and almost fanatical intensity of Isaiah from such a scene as this. Here is a man of high social station, probably related to the royal family, who is willing through three long years to expose himself to the jeers and scorn of his fellow townsmen in order to impress upon them an important but unwelcome truth." (1) In opposing the alliance with words he says, "Now the Egyptians are men and not God; and their horses are flesh and not spirit, and when Jehovah shall stretch out his hand, both he that helpeth shall stumble and he that is helped shall fall and they shall be consumed together." (Isa. 31:3)

Upon the murder of Sargon II and the accession of Sennacherib to the throne of Assyria (705 B.C.) another occasion called forth the political zeal of Isaiah. Babylonia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Sidon, Tyre, and Philistia formed a coalition to revolt from Assyria and Hezekiah was prompt to join. To the embassy that had come from Ethiopia to solicit alliance Isaiah is quick to say what he thinks. "Return to your country. All ye inhabitants of the world and dwellers on the earth, see ye, when he lifteth up an ensign on the mountains, and when he bloweth a trumpet hear ye." (Isa. 18:3) Isaiah was evidently

(1) Knudson, A. C.: The Beacon Light of Prophecy p. 127



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not able to make his opinion prevail in this instance for in 702 B. C. Hezekiah withheld tribute from Assyria and the battle was on. (1)

Sennacherib soon advanced with his forces through Syria and into Phoenicia in 701 B. C. And the resistance of the petty kingdom at once collapsed. (2) He wrought havoc through all of Judah. He gives a description of the events himself on a cylinder that was found at Nineveh in 1830. "And as to Hezekiah, the Judean, who had not submitted to my yoke, forty six of his strong holds fortified cities, and smaller cities of their environs without number, with the onset of battering rams and the attack of engines, mines, breaches, and axes, I besieged, I captured 200,150 people, small and great, male and female, horses, mules, asses, camels, oxen, and sheep without number I brought out of their midst and counted as booty. He himself/I shut up like a caged bird in Jerusalem, his capital city. I erected beleaguering works against him and turned back by command every one who came out of his city gate." (3)

These were the spoils that were taken from Jerusalem when Hezekiah tried to effect a reconciliation with Sennacherib by offering him spoils for protection. It completely justified the idea of doom at the hand of Assyria that Isaiah had been preaching. The crowning vindication of Isaiah's policy was yet to come, however. Sennacherib evidently thought better of his agreement to leave Jerusalem intact and come back de-

- (1) Ottley, R.L.: A Short History of the Hebrews p. 201
- (2) Ibid., p. 201
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The faith of Isaiah is again justified for something happened to the Assyrian army to put them to rout. Herodotus suggests (Book II Chapter 141) that it was field mice that caused their flight. "As the two armies lay here opposite one another there came in the night a multitude of field mice, which devoured all the quivers and bow-strings of the enemy, and ate the thongs by which they managed their shields. Next morning they commenced their ~~soon~~ flight, and great multitudes fell as they had no arms with which to defend themselves." (1)

Whether or not it was this or a pestilence that befell them the fact remains that they left and Judah was saved for a longer time.

Recapitulation of the political influence which Isaiah exerted would be merely reiteration of the history of his times. He came to the front in three great events: 1. He severely denounced the alliance with Assyria under Ahaz; 2. He averted the Egyptian alliance during the early years of the reign of Hezekiah and 3. He protested the revolt of Hezekiah from under Sennacherib but predicted security from utter destruction. The political situation of Judah from 740 B. C. to about 700 B. C. could not be related without

(1) Rawlinson, George: The History of Herodotus p. 189 Vol.II



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the name Isaiah. In fact, he was practically the political situation himself. "Ahaz and Hezekiah might fill the throne; but Isaiah was the real ruler of Yahweh's heritage. And the future of the nation was largely determined by the ideals of national life and government set forth by the prophet." (1)

#### E- MICAH

Contemporary with the great prophet statesman Isaiah and taking the same general attitude toward Jerusalem was the prophet Micah. (2) Very little is known of the man Micah as our sources of information concerning him are confined to the first three chapters of the book bearing his name and in Jeremiah 26:18 where he is referred to in defense of the activity of Jeremiah. He is called Micah the Morashtite (Micah 1:1, Jer. 26:18) which apparently identifies his home with Moresheth-Gath (Micah 1:14) which was probably located in the low hills bordering upon Philistine territory (3) Although the exact location of his home cannot be determined accurately it is very evident that he lived in the country and not in the city Jerusalem as did his contemporary Isaiah.

"A man of the countryside like Amos, Micah was gifted with clearness of vision and time for thought ..... He had Amos' passion for justice and Hosea's heart of love. Knowing his fellow-countrymen intimately and sympathising profoundly with their sufferings and wrongs his spirit burned with indignation as he beheld the injustice and tyranny of

(1) Ibid., p. 84

(2) Eiselen, F. C.: Prophecy and the Prophets p. 116

(3) Smith, G. A.: The Book of the Twelve Vol. I p. 434



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their rich oppressors. He was pre-eminently the prophet of the poor. He was absolutely fearless as their champion. He would denounce wickedness in high places even though it cost him his life. The fear<sup>r</sup>lessness and force of his character and message deeply impressed his contemporaries so that even a century later his example was cited as establishing a precedent for Jeremiah's freedom of speech (Jer. 26:18)." (1)

It is the almost universally accepted opinion of more modern commentators now to say that much of the material contained in the book of Micah did not come from the hand of the eighth-century prophet. (2) The first three chapters are considered his with the possible exception 2:12 f. which are perhaps only in the wrong place. The rest of the book is more than likely the work of a later hand and at least 7:7-20 must be ascribed to a hand not earlier than the Exile and perhaps even later. (3) "In other words, only 1:2 to 2:11 and 3:1-12 are by the majority of recent scholars admitted to have been delivered by the eighth century Micah and within these three chapters some scholars are inclined to question a number of verses." (4)

All of this is important from our standpoint in determining what he actually said and to what extent he influenced the politics of his time for the later additions to the text change to a great extent the temper of the utterances.

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(1) Smith, J. M.P., Ward, W.H., Bewer J.A.: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Micah, Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Obadiah and Joel p. 18

(2) ~~Eiselen, F.C.: The Prophetic Books of the Old Testament p. 484~~

(3) Kautzsch, E: An Outline of the History of the Litl of O.T. p. 38

(4) Ibid., p. 477



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The political conditions which existed during the time of Micah were essentially the same as those reflected by his older contemporary Isaiah. The difference that we observe in the two prophets is that of the standpoint from which they view it. While "Isaiah views the situation from the standpoint of the patrician, the man of the city, Micah sees it from the point of view of the humble peasant from an obscure country village." (1)

No great epoch in the history of prophecy is marked by the prophet Micah. He does not embody any new teaching but taking the great truths proclaimed by his predecessors he reiterates them after having "forged his message in the passion of his own soul, and stamped upon it the impress of his own personality." (2)

The greatest contribution which he made to the political situation lay in his announcement of the doom upon Israel that was being brought about by the unjust social conditions. Jehovah will not long allow conditions to exist where the poor are so unmercifully trodden under foot. "Woe to them that devise iniquity and work evil upon their beds! when the morning is light, they practice it, because it is in the power of their hand. And they covet fields and seize them; and houses and take them away; and they oppress a man and his house even a man and his heritage." (Micah 2:1-2)

It is evident that even the judges and ecclesiastical authority fall in the same category for they think that Jehovah is with them and no harm can befall. "The heads thereof judge for

(1) Robinson, T.H.: Prophecy and the Prophets p.90

(2) Smith, J.M.P., Ward, W.H., Bewer, J.A.: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Micah, Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Obadiah and Joel p.23



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reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money; yet they lean upon Jehovah and say Is not Jehovah, in the midst of us? No evil shall come upon us." (Micah 3:11)

It must have been a great shock to the people to hear Micah berating the conditions of the time for Hezekiah the king was a building king and things seemed to be very prosperous. Micah does not speak directly against the kings as Isaiah had done but blames the corruption upon the nobles. To them he says, "Hear this, I pray you, ye heads of the house of Jacob and rulers of the house of Israel, that abhor justice and pervert all equity. They build up Zion with blood and Jerusalem with iniquity. Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps and the mountain of the house as the high places of a priest." (Micah 3:10,19)

What the immediate effect of Micah's preaching was we have no means of knowing. It is true that Jeremiah indicated (Jer. 26:18,19) that Hezekiah's reformation was due to Micah's influence but such seems hardly possible. Neither the record in Jeremiah nor the account of the reform agrees with the message of Micah as we have it. Further, Micah seems to have denounced the nobles rather than the king as Jeremiah would indicate, and he was primarily concerned with social conditions. At any rate his words were remembered among the people and his example established a precedent which



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was of great service to Jeremiah, who carried a similar message. (1)

#### IV The Babylonian Period

##### A- Historical Background

After the deliverance of Jerusalem in 701 B.C. from the Assyrians Judah had peace for twenty-three years and Hezekiah was free to devote his attention<sup>to</sup> the purification of worship. It cannot be said ~~that~~ what success he achieved but he is said to have removed all of the high places and to have cut down the serpent (II Kings 18:4). When Hezekiah died early in the seventh century he was succeeded by his twelve year old son Manasseh who appears to have been captured by the party whom his father had opposed. (2) He encouraged idolatry and did all manner of evil throughout the land. "And he did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah after the abominations of the nations whom Jehovah cast before the children of Israel" (II Kings 21:2). He also continued to pay tribute to the Assyrian kings and was in fact little more than a vassal.(3)

He was succeeded by his son Amon who reigned for two years. (II Kings 21:18) "For some reason dissatisfaction broke out among the king's servants and he was assassinated perhaps, indirectly at least, through the influence of the

(1) Ibid., p. 26

(2) Smith, G. A.: The Book of the Twelve Prophets Vol. II p. 5

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(1) Ibid., p. 88  
(2) Smith, G. A.: The Book of the Twelve Prophets Vol. II p. 3  
(3) Eisselen, W.C.: Prophecy and the Prophets p. 185



prophetic party, which was in disfavor both with Amon and with Manasseh" (1)

Upon the death of Amon his son Josiah a child of eight ascended the throne of Judah (II Kings 22:1) Whether or not this change of kings was effected by the prophetic party cannot be determined. It is, however, quite possible to suppose that it was. The Assyrian yoke had been lifted for Assurbanipal's campaigns of 647 and 645 were the last appearances of Assyria in Palestine "With the loosening of the Assyrian ~~in~~ yoke the national spirit would revive, and it is easy to imagine prophets, priests and people working together in the movement which placed the child Josiah on the throne." (2) At any rate the reforms which Josiah carried out would seem to indicate that he had been under the influence of prophets in his earlier years at least.

During the period of the seventh century the world outside Judah as well as Judah was in great commotion. As had been the case in the eighth century the storm clouds of political destruction were forming in the north. This time it was not Assyria but the powers that were to break up the great empire. The Scythians, a nomad race, from the regions over Caucasus, swept upon the country in great numbers. This flood of destruction naturally spread terror in every direction. The people of Judah were living in mortal dread of the encroaching invasion and under such conditions it is natural to expect to see some prophet rising to express the

(1) Ibid., ;p. 125

(2)Smith, G.A.: The Book of the Twelve Prophets Vol.II P.13



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 had been the case in the eighth century the storm clouds of  
 political destruction were forming in the north. This time  
 it was not Assyria but the powers that were to break up the  
 great empire. The Scythians, a nomad race, from the regions  
 over Caucasus, swept upon the country in great numbers. This  
 flood of destruction naturally spread terror in every  
 direction. The people of Judah were living in mortal dread of  
 the encroaching invasion and under such conditions it is  
 natural to expect to see some prophet rising to express the

(1) Ibid., p. 125  
 (2) Smith, E.A.: The Book of the Twelve Prophets Vol. II p. 13



religious meaning of the occasion. Zephaniah and Jeremiah are the ones who sprang to the task of opening the eyes of the people to its significance. (1) It is with their particular political influence that we are concerned here so we will turn to a consideration of them.

#### B- ZEPHANIAH

Zephaniah was evidently a citizen of Jerusalem if we can judge from his intimate knowledge of the topography of that city (Zeph. 1:10-11) and of the religious and social situations of it as well as the fact that he seems to speak of himself as living in Jerusalem in 1:4. The fact that he was of royal descent is implied in 1:1 where Hezekiah is named as the father of Zephaniah's grandfather. He does not have that sense of intimate fellowship with the poor as was noticed particularly in Micah. "His point of view is rather that of the aristocrat." (2)

The temper of the whole book of Zephaniah and of his attitude is stated at the beginning of the book. "I will utterly consume all things from off the face of the ground saith Jehovah." (Zeph. 1:2) "There is no great hope in his book, hardly any tenderness and never a glimpse of beauty. A townsman, Zephaniah has no eye for nature; not only is no fair prospect described by him, he has not even a single metaphor drawn from nature's loveliness or peace . . . . . no hotter book lies in all the Old Testament. .... Nor does

(1) ~~Ibid.~~, p. 108 *Smith, J.M.P., The Prophets and Their Times*

(2) Ibid., p. 109



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Zephaniah foretell the restoration of nature in the end of the days. There is no prospect of a redeemed and fruitful land, but only of a group of battered and hardly saved characters; a few meek and righteous are hidden from the fire and creep forth when it is over. Israel is left a poor and humble folk. No prophet is more true to the doctrine of the remnant, or more resolutely refuses to modify it. (1)

As with the earlier prophets Zephaniah sees the sins of Judah as responsible for the coming destruction. Sins against Yahweh himself, worship of the Baalism, sun-worship, idolatry and utter apostasy from Yahweh are among the forefront. To these are added social injustice of the rich, perversion of right by the judges, importation of foreign styles, deceit and lying of the prophets and irreligion of the priests.

Here again, however, we cannot make a fine distinction between the religious and the political. Zephaniah saw the approaching Scythians and with the foresight of a state diplomat couched in the terms of an ecclesiastic he expressed it as the "advance guard of the great Day of Yahweh." (2)

Zephaniah brought nothing new to the solution of the problems of his day. He merely reiterated the position of the earlier prophets without much of their good characteristics. "He is a destructive critic pure and simple. He does not stress the ethical element in the coming judgment; it is rather a punishment sent by Yahewh upon a wicked world that does not

(1) Smith, G. A.: The Book of the Twelve Prophets Vol.II p. 48

(2) Smith, J.M.P: The Prophets and their Times p. 108



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(1) Smith, G. A.: The Book of the Twelve Prophets Vol. II p. 48  
(2) Smith, G. A.: The Prophets and Their Times p. 108



recognize his power. Zephaniah was little more than a voice crying in the wilderness, "Prepare for the day of Yahweh." (1)

#### C- NAHUM

The anticipation which Zephaniah had of immediate judgment on Judah was not fulfilled with the Scythian invasion. It had, in fact, benefitted her for Assyria was so weakened that she could no longer oppress Judah. Another power, Media, was arising in the east and was strong enough to attempt a siege of Nineveh even before the Scythian invasion. This was unsuccessful for Cyaxares, the king, had to fortify his country against the invaders but when that danger was past he returned to his plans (1) In addition to this, Babylonia under Nabopolassar made alliance with the Media and together they attacked Nineveh which after a long siege fell in 612 B.C.

Into this situation comes the prophet Nahum gloating over the possibility of the complete destruction of Assyria. He apparently spoke just before the downfall of Nineveh at the hands of the Babylonians and Medes (2) Nothing is known of him. "He is simply a voice speaking out of the dark" (3) The thing for which he is significant is the fact that he is a fairly accurate representative of the mind of the people at the time.

For a long time Assyria had been the taskmaster and overlord. She had enforced her will to the extent of spoiling one capital after another. Word of the death of such an

(1) Smith; H. P.: Old Testament History p. 276

(2) Smith, J.M.P: The Prophets and Their Times p. 123

(3) Ibid., -p. 123



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(2) Smith, J. M. P.: The Prophets and Their Times p. 123  
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oppressor would be the signal for the rejoicing of all those who had suffered at their hands. Nahum both as a patriot and a loyal Yahweh subject rejoices in Assyria's imminent overthrow. The love of Yahweh to Judah had been at stake under the continued dominance of Assyria. Hence it was much easier to believe in Yahweh with Assyria gone than with her yoke of oppression continually on the neck of Judah. For that reason Nahum breaks into song at the real prospect of the approaching doom of the doom imposer.

The actual political influence which he exerted was very slight. He is even worse than Zephaniah as a prophet but "he is a greater poet, pouring forth the exultation of a people long enslaved, who see their tyrant ready for destruction." (1)

#### D HABAKKUK

New evidence has recently been discovered which shows that the downfall of Nineveh (612 B.C.) was not the complete end of the Assyrian Empire but that they set up headquarters in Harran. (2) It is also shown that Pharaoh Necho of Egypt was not going to seize the territory of Assyria in 608 B.C. when Josiah met him at Megiddo, but was going in support of Assyria against Babylon. It is doubtful if there was even a battle but Necho on his way sent for Josiah to make sure of his attitude toward Egypt and not finding it to his liking killed him. (3)

- (1) Smith, G.A.: The Book of the Twelve Prophets (vol. 2) p.91
- (2) Smith, J.M.P.: The Prophets and Their Times p. 122
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(1) Smith, G.A.: The Book of the Twelve Prophets (Vol. 2) p. 91  
(2) Smith, G.A.: The Prophecy and Their Times p. 122  
(3) Ibid. p. 123



Upon the death of Josiah the people enthroned Jehoahaz but Necho dethroned him placing Jehoiakim on the throne instead and imposed heavy tribute upon him. (II Kings 23:30-35) Soon after this time, however, Necho and the Egyptian as well as Assyrian domination came to an end. In 605 B.C. Nebuchadrezzar of Babylon, met Pharaoh Necho, of Egypt, the Assyrian ally at Carchemish and put him to rout. (1) From that moment Nebuchadrezzar was master of Western Asia.

In connection with this rise of the Babylonians or Chaldeans to power the prophet Habakkuk appears to sustain the legacy of the prophets. The personal life of the man and the extent to which he is responsible for the book that bears his name cannot be definitely stated. It would seem that he lived under the reign of Jehoiakim who was selfish, tyrannical, and godless and under whose hand the deplorable conditions of Manasseh's reign returned. (2) It was this that caused him to begin asking, "O Jehovah how long shall I cry, and thou wilt not hear? I cry out unto thee of violence, and thou wilt not save." (Hab. 1:2)

In answer to this Yahweh himself appears as the speaker. He says that he is about to do an almost incredible thing. He is bringing the Chaldeans, or Babylonians, to chastise all of the evil. "For lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, that march through the breadth of the earth, to possess dwelling-places that are not theirs. They are terrible and dreadful; their judgement and their

(1) Smith, H.P.: Old Testament History p.273

(2) Eiselen, F.C.: Prophecy and the Prophets p. 175



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dignity proceed from themselves." (Hab. 1:6-7)

This answer which he received rather than solving complicated the problem of Habakkuk. While it was true that the wicked in Judah deserved punishment the Chaldeans were more wicked than those whom they were to punish and there were some good Jews who would suffer a like fate with the wicked. Habakkuk then asks whether the Chaldeans are to go on indefinitely defying God and man (Hab. 1:13-17).

The answer to this challenge is not long in coming. "Behold, his soul is puffed up, it is not upright in him; but the righteous shall live by his faith" (Hab. 2:4) "This means simply that the Chaldeans power is doomed to downfall because of its internal weakness ..... The Chaldean power carries within itself the seeds of its own destruction. But the righteous people, that is the Jewish nation will endure and triumph because of its sound character." (1)

The political declaration of Habakkuk is then two-fold. First, Judah is to suffer at the hands of the Chaldeans. Second, the Chaldeans will eventually fall while Judah will continue to live because of its internal moral character.

#### E- JEREMIAH

"Jeremiah was the greatest of the great prophets of Israel. He looked deepest into the heart of God and into his own heart. This insight made him a man, prophet, speaker, and poet of special excellence." (2) Beginning his activity

(1) Smith, J.M.P: The Prophets and Their Times p. 131

(2) Kittel, R: Great Men and Movements in Israel p. 334



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(1) Smith, J.M.P.: The Prophets and Their Times p. 131  
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in the year 626 B.C. he was apparently called forth to meet the crisis of the Scythian invasion. (1) The call which he received would be to a young man, as he was (Jer. 1:6) sufficient to account for his shrinking from the task which was opened before them. "I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, ~~and~~ to pluck up and to break down and to destroy and to overthrow, ~~then~~ to build and to plant." (Jer. 1:10). From the very first then his prophetic activity has taken on the color of politics. He is to be concerned with the fate of nations. He is called to pronounce doom upon the nation which he loves and to insist upon her surrender to a country which he sees as essentially evil.

As we have noticed with earlier prophets Jeremiah is greatly concerned with idol worship and apostasy. He saw as had others that this was brought on by and resulted in alliances with other nations. This, for Jeremiah, showed a lack of faith in Yahweh and reflected unfavorably upon him, for policies of alliance with other nations involved a more or less formal and official recognition of the gods of the allied peoples. (2) That is one of the greatest reasons why Jeremiah in line with prophetic custom denounced foreign alliances. He protested against any dealings with Egypt or Assyria as worse than futile. "Why gaddest thou about so much to change thy way? Thou shalt be ashamed of Egypt also, as thou wast ashamed of Assyria" (Jer. 2:36)

- (1) Smith, J.M.P.: The Prophets and Their Times p. 131  
 (2) Ibid., p. 114



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(1) Smith, J.M.P.: The Prophets and Their Times p. 151  
 (2) Ibid., p. 114



In the fourth to the sixth chapters of Jeremiah are found the Scythian songs which were evidently called forth by the proximity of the peril which Jeremiah saw. The preaching of destruction which Jeremiah was forced to make was revolting to his whole soul." My anguish my anguish! I am pained at my very heart; my heart is disquieted in me." (Jer. 4:19) Most of the songs are filled with pictures of the approaching enemy and the destruction which is to be committed on all sides and of the sins which have caused it to come to pass.

As a matter of fact the Scythian invasion passed and left the world order essentially unchanged. It was simply a plundering raid by a horde of nomads and probably inflicted relatively little damage on Judah and Jerusalem. (1) The terrible pictures of destruction which Jeremiah had painted remained unfulfilled and he was branded as a false prophet. It seems clear that he felt the full force of the blow from the fact that he lapsed into silence for a period of about fourteen years after the Scythian invasion. "The Deuteronomic reform in 621 B.C. did not stir him to utterance nor did the downfall of Nineveh in 612 B.C. call him forth from his retirement." (2) It is probable that he came forth again soon after the death of Josiah in 608 B.C. We know that he was favorable to Josiah (Jer. 22:1, 10-19) In striking contrast to his attitude toward Josiah is his denunciation of and to Jehoiakim. (Jer. 22:18f) His courage has by no means abated during the

(1) Smith, H. P. Old Testament History p. 276

(2) Smith, J.M.P.: The Prophets and Their Times p. 118



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(2) Smith, J. M. P. The Prophets and Their Times p. 118



time of his inactivity for he predicts that unadulterated catastrophes are to fall upon the head of Jehoiakim.

His activity in this regard was quite comparable to that which we noticed in Isaiah. He dared to express himself in denunciatory terms about the king to the face of the king himself. He went still farther and foretold the total destruction of the Temple for which bit of prophecy he almost lost his life. (Jer. 7:1-15; 26:1-24) He was only saved when someone remembered the prophecy of Micah and cited his case as a precedent for the immunity of Jeremiah.

He went to great lengths in impressing upon his hearers that destruction was coming to the city. In one instance he is reported as having buried a loin cloth along the banks of the Euphrates and later digging it up when it had rotted to show the uselessness of Judah in the sight of Yahweh. (Jer. 13:1-11) At another time he took an earthen vessel to the edge of the city and there broke it to show that in like manner the city would be destroyed. (Jer. 19:1-15).

It was noticed that in Jeremiah's call he saw himself dealing with other nations besides Judah. It seems reasonable then, to accept the oracles against foreign nations (Jer. 25:15f; 46-51) as <sup>be</sup>king at least based on materials coming from Jeremiah himself. (1) It was inevitable that anyone dealing with national problems in the last day of Judah could not escape contact with international problems. The politics of any nation had to include other nations. Accepting this as

(1) Ibid., p. 142



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true we see that the political influence of Jeremiah takes on greater proportions. He sees all of the nations as a part of the plan of Yahweh. In taking other nations into consideration he shows his awareness of their political possibilities. Not only is the world situation affecting his message to Judah but his message is affecting the world situation. "The form of Jeremiah's message was political rather than religious. He was the spokesman of a diminishing and persecuted minority party, who opposed the current international policy of his government, and although the method of his address — ~~perhaps~~ the monotonous, predi<sup>o</sup>tion of doom — ~~it~~ is hardly the type of political argument that would be effective today, we must recall that to his contemporaries it was more cogent." (1)

All of these dire prophecies which Jeremiah had been making did not go unrebuked. We have seen how on one occasion his life was just saved by the citation of the precedent of Micah. On another occasion when he had dramatically predicted the destruction of Jerusalem he was arrested by the chief of the Temple police, Pashur, and was placed in stocks for the night. When he was released he called down the curse of God upon them and ended in uttering a curse upon the day of his own birth. (Jer. 20:1-18)

Despite all that Jeremiah could do Jehoikim<sup>a</sup> broke into open rebellion against Nebuchadrezzar and the Chaldean domination in 601. B.C. (2) At first Nebuchadrezzar sent only vassal kings against Judah but eventually gave orders to

(1) Cadbury, H.J.: National Ideals in the Old Testament p. 167  
 (2) Lofthouse, W.F.: Jeremiah and the New Covenant p. 124



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(1) Gaebelein, E.L.: National Ideals in the Old Testament p. 187  
 (2) Lefebvre, W.R.: Jeremiah and the New Covenant p. 124



besiege Jerusalem (II Kings 24:2,11). Meantime Jehoiakim was succeeded by his son Jehoiachin. During the siege Jeremiah came forward with one symbolic action. Some Rechabites had taken refuge inside the city and to these who had vowed to touch no wine Jeremiah offered the cup. When they refused he told the people of Judah that these wanderers were much more loyal to their founder than they the Jews were to Yahweh and hence the destruction was sure to come. (Jer. 35)

After a siege of three months the city did fall in 597 B. C. Jehoiachin and all of the leaders of the country were subsequently deported to Babylon. (1)

Shortly after the deportation in 597 B.C. Jeremiah related another vision in which he likened the people of Judah to two baskets of figs. The exiles were like good figs and those left behind were old and rotten. (Jer. 24) This is significant in that he was talking to the bad figs and in fact was in Jerusalem himself. In this utterance we have the first gleam of hope that can be seen in Jeremiah. He saw that the future of the people lay with the exiles who would in due time return to their homes to rebuild the fortunes of the city.

Significant also from our point of view is the letter which he wrote to the exiles shortly after their arrival in Babylon. (Jer. 29) Some false prophets had been predicting a speedy return to Jerusalem and against this Jeremiah decries. He urges them to cooperate with the native population, as

(1) ~~Ibid.~~, p. 148 Smith, J.A.R. *The Prophets and Their Times*



beside Jerusalem (II Kings 24:18). Meanwhile Jehoiachin was succeeded by his son Jehoiachin. During the siege Jerusalem came forward with one symbolic action. Some Babelites had taken refuge inside the city and to these who had vowed to touch no wine Jeremiah offered the cup. When they refused he told the people of Judah that these wanderers were much more loyal to their founder than they the Jews, were to Yahweh and hence the destruction was sure to come. (Jer. 35)

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Significant also from our point of view is the letter which he wrote to the exiles shortly after their arrival in Babylon. (Jer. 29) Some false prophets had been predicting a speedy return to Jerusalem and against this Jeremiah declares he urges them to cooperate with the native population, as



much as possible, and thus to further their own prosperity as well as that of the Babylonians.

This spirit of restlessness under Babylonian vassalage was prevalent in Judah and the surrounding region as well as with the exiles. In the fourth year of the reign of Zedekiah, who had succeeded Jehoiachin delegates from several of the surrounding countries appeared in Jerusalem to arrange for a joint revolt. Jeremiah was strictly against such a coalition, and again and again urged submission. Taking a yoke around his neck to symbolize acceptance of the Babylonian yoke he appeared at the Temple. When this was broken by Hananiah, a prophet urging revolt, Jeremiah countered by saying, "Thou has broken the bars of wood; but ~~these~~ thou hast made in their stead bars of iron." (Jer. 28:13)

Zedekiah failed to listen to the counsel of Jeremiah and entering the revolt against Babylon soon found the Babylonian army at his front door. (1) Seeing this Zedekiah immediately sent for Jeremiah to find out whether Yahweh would save the city. His answer was an unequivocal, No, and that the only salvation for the people was to desert to the Babylonians. (Jer. 21)

During the early part of the siege an army from Egypt approached to relieve Jerusalem and the Babylonian army withdrew to meet the new foe. (Jer. 37:5) With their departure Zedekiah again came to inquire whether the Babylonians would return. In the strongest possible terms Jeremiah re-

(1) Ibid., p. 148, 153



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peated his former statement and said they would not only return but would take the city. (Jer. 34:8-11)

The faith which he had in the future of the country was put to a severe test about a year before the fall of the city. A message was sent to him in prison, into which he had been thrown by the government, that his nephew had a piece of land in Anathoth, Jeremiah's home town for sale. Taking this again as symbolic he brought the land and thus evidenced his faith that the country would eventually be delivered. (Jer. 32)

For the third time he was called into the presence of Zedekiah concerning the fate of Jerusalem and for the third time he prophesied that it would fall. All of his predictions were not in vain this time for the city fell in 586 B.C. and the second deportation into Babylon took place. (1) Nebuchadnezzar overtook Zedekiah who was trying to escape and having him blinded took him into captivity. Jeremiah was left in Jerusalem under the charge of his friend Gedaliah. (Jer. 39: 11-14).

During the time of peace that followed it is likely that Jeremiah produced his greatest utterance, the prophecy of the new covenant. Here he penetrated deeply into the nature of religion and made of it an individual and inner compulsion to walk in the ways of Yahweh.

This peace and quiet was soon broken. Civil war broke out and the survivors set out to flee into Egypt being

(1) Lofthouse: W.F. Jeremiah and the New Covenant p. 166



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afraid of the vengeance of the Babylonians. Before taking the final step they asked Jeremiah what to do and assured him they would do whatever Yahweh commanded. After deliberating ten days Jeremiah advised remaining in Judah but they defied him and fled into Egypt taking him with them. He then prophesied that Nebuchadrezzar would take Egypt and render their flight useless. (Jer. 43) The last we see of Jeremiah is in Egypt, alone and helpless prophesying against the pagan, worship of the people of Judah in Egypt. (1)

The political influence which Jeremiah exerted cannot be summed up in a paragraph. It extended over the whole period of his life. While in many cases his advice was spurned and his prophecy ignored history has vindicated his position. He was, of course, not infallible as a political prophet but his general attitude was far superior to that of his contemporaries although he was considered by them to be a traitor to his country. It is shown beyond question by his constant association with kings and by the fact of the recognition of his authority by the Babylonians that he was a man of great political eminence.

## VI Post-Exilic Prophets

### Ezekiel

The book of Ezekiel records the activity of Ezekiel between July 593 B.C. and April 571 B.C. (2) Ezekiel was a priest who was carried captive to Babylon in 597 B.C. There

(1) Smith, J. M. P.: The Prophets and Their Times p. 159

(2) Ibid., p. 161



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(1) Smith, J. M. P.: The Prophets and Their Times p. 189  
(2) Ibid., p. 161



was no place for him in Babylon as a priest so he found himself functioning as a prophet but he did not cease to be a priest in spirit. As a consequence his book is couched in priestly terms and dominated by priestly interests. (1) With all of this there went also a deeply mystical temperament. Again and again throughout his life he was subjected to sudden attacks of "the hand of Yahweh". When in such a condition he saw wonderful visions which he proceeded to describe in his book in great detail.

The call which he received to the prophetic ministry (Ezek. 1-3) came to him in this trance-like state. He saw Jehovah as coming in a stormcloud borne by a wonderful chariot. Jehovah had come to sit upon a throne and to rule the universe. This conception of Jehovah is directly linked up with the first section of his book (Ezek. 1-24) which contains for the most part prophecies against Judah uttered before 586 B.C. The second division of the book (Ezek. 25-32) is concerned with oracles against foreign nations. In the third section (Ezek. 33-48) the dominant note is changed to promises for the future <sup>as</sup> ~~so~~ it was written after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B. C. (2)

As we have noted in the case of Jeremiah's letter to the Babylonian exiles they thought that a further destruction of Jerusalem after 597 B. C. was impossible. When they received Jeremiah's message they sent back word that he should be thrown into prison and when Ezekiel likewise prophesied

- (1) Knudson, A.C.: Beacon Lights of Prophecy p. 202  
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destruction they openly defied him (Ezek. 12:21-28) Ezekiel tells of visions after visions portraying the fall and destruction of Jerusalem. He went beyond all of his predecessors in his severe condemnation of Judah. Earlier prophets had represented Israel as loyal to Yahweh in the days of its youth but as going astray when other gods were met in Canaan. Ezekiel declared that Israel was steeped in idolatry even from its birth, being born of idolatrous parents -- Hittites and Amorites (Ezek. 16) He even said that Sodom~~en~~, Gomorrah, and Samaria were not so wicked as Judah had been. (Ezek. 16,23) Yet despite all of this wickedness Ezekiel said that when Judah became penitent Yahweh would forgive <sup>her</sup> ~~his~~ sins and restore her to her own land. (Ezek. 16:60-63)

The section of the book that is devoted to oracles against foreign nations clearly reflects the conviction that Babylon is to dominate the civilized world. The downfall of Egypt is gloated over and she is represented as having gone to Sheol to be surrounded by the lesser peoples. In dire phrases Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philista (Ezek. 25) Tyre, and Sidon (Ezek. 26-28) and Egypt (Ezek. 29-32) are denounced. There is nothing especially significant from our point of view in these chapters except that they form the connecting link between Ezekiel's message of doom and that of hope.

Prior to the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. his message to the exile was almost completely one of doom. He was in addition to dispelling the vain hopes of the exiles trying



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also to prepare their minds for the inevitable catastrophe in order that their religious faith would not be shaken by it. (1) When Jerusalem fell so fell also Ezekiel's message of doom. It is not at all unusual that such a direct change should take place in his preaching for both messages had the same end in view. For a long time the Hebrews had thought that they were the chosen people of Yahweh and that no harm could befall them. All of the prophets saw that this was a false conception. While they were the chosen people it did not mean that they were to be preserved from the infliction of any punishment for their wrongdoings. Because they were the chosen people did on the other hand mean that they were doubly responsible for their actions. Ezekiel, then, was very emphatic in showing that it was not because of Yahweh's impotence that Jerusalem was going to fall but because of his power and righteousness in punishing the sinners.

After Jerusalem had fallen, however, Ezekiel saw that there was no longer any need to prophesy doom but that the people needed a message of hope to keep them from despair. If the suffering which they were undergoing was due to their sinfulness and if they were as sinful as Ezekiel had said that they were then complete disaster must follow. Seeing that this psychology had seized the people Ezekiel began to prophesy a great restoration. The restoration which he pictured was so great that even nature would take on a different aspect. The mountains were to shoot forth their branches and yield their

(1) Knudson, A.C.: Beacon Lights of Prophecy p. 226



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fruit. The people were going to be secure in their land. "They shall no more be a prey to the nations, neither shall the beasts of the earth devour them; but they shall dwell securely, and none shall make them afraid." (Ezek. 34:28)

This promise of a restored nation did not meet all of the difficulties of the people for they were still disturbed by the apparent injustice of Yahweh's dealing with them. The promise of a brilliant future was good but that did not materially help the sufferings through which they were passing at that time. They thought that they were suffering for the sins committed by someone else. To meet this problem Ezekiel set forth his doctrine of individual responsibility (Ezek. 3:16-21; 14:12-20; 18:1-32; 33:1-20) which is his great contribution to prophecy and the place where he most vitally effected politics. From his point of view it was not for the sins of their fathers that the people were suffering but because of their own individual sins. "What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge? As I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, ye shall not have occasion to use this proverb in Israel. Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die." (Ezek. 18:2-4) In this way he has clearly stated that everyone is to answer for his own sin and that he cannot blame others for the things which he is suffering because of his own errors.

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In this way Ezekiel has not only made them conscious



of their own sins but has helped to adjust them to the overthrow of the state and at the same time determined to a large extent the nature of the post-exilic religion. He has separated the nation from the individual. No longer is it necessary to have the state to have religion. National intrigues and international entanglements become petty and picayune when faced with such a doctrine for there will be no need of such things.

The actual results which he accomplished were almost as revolutionary as the Utopia which he glimpsed. He became the virtual founder of Judaism and the turning point of Hebrew history. Since the nation was no longer in evidence the religion of the Hebrews was conserved in Judaism with its legalism and insistence upon ceremony. Ezekiel practically changed the whole life of the Hebrews and has been called "the most influential man in the whole course of Hebrew history." (1)



of their own time and has failed to adjust them to the over-throw of the state and at the same time determined to a large extent the nature of the post-state religion. He has exaggerated the nation from the individual. He is longer in its necessity to have the state to have national, national interests and international entanglements become petty and pitiful when faced with such a doctrine for there will be no need of such things. The actual results which he accomplished were almost as revolutionary as the Utopia which he glimpsed. He became the virtual founder of Judaism and the turning point of Jewish history. Since the nation was no longer in evidence the religion of the Hebrews was conserved in Judaism with its legalism and insistence upon ceremony. Ezekiel practically changed the whole life of the Hebrews and has been called "the most influential man in the whole course of Hebrew history." (1)



## Deutero-Isaiah

As we have noticed with Ezekiel there was a distinct change in prophecy after the fall of Jerusalem. That change is in evidence with all the rest of the prophets. The Exile had produced a profound impression upon the Jewish people as a whole. After it they were never again the same politically or religiously. The period of the monarchy was at an end and the Jews were now subject to a foreign power. The local government fell into the hands of the priests and resulted in not a Jewish state but a church. (1) Political ambitions were at an end. There was no aggressive nationalism nor militaristic spirit, against which the earlier prophets had to contend. The national spirit as a whole gave way to a religious spirit that was preserved through the form and ceremony to which Ezekiel had given rise.

Into such a state came the great prophet whose sermons are contained in Isaiah, Chapters 40-55. "All scholars of today agree that these prophecies were written, not by Isaiah in the eighth century B.C., but by a contemporary of the exile, who wrote out of the midst of exilic conditions."<sup>2</sup>

The beginning of his prophecy characterizes his whole work. Previously the prophet had been delivering messages of doom with only here and there a gleam of light and hope. The message of Deutero-Isaiah on the other hand, is one of hope and peace. He begins, "Comfort ye, comfort ye,

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(2) Smith, J.M.P.: The Prophets and Their Times p. 179



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my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem; and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she hath received of Jehovah's hand double for all her sins." (Isa. 40:1-2) With these words he began his prophetic ministry and in this spirit he continued it.

This message of hope was to be in the first place a restoration of the exiles from Babylon. The glories of the exodus from Egypt will fade <sup>into</sup> with the background when compared with this restoration (see: Isa. 43:16-21) Nature itself will deck itself in fine colors (Isa. 41:18,19,43:19) and Palestine is to be transformed into an Eden (51:3) For more than fifty or sixty years the Israelites had been in captivity in Babylon but they had not lost interest in the homeland. (1) It is by no means unnatural to see a prophet arising at this time to predict the downfall of Babylon and to see in Cyrus, the Persian, the savior of the Jews.

While the chief interest of Deutero-Isaiah is in showing Yahweh to be the one great and righteous God he has also the ability that we have noticed in other prophets of clearly discerning the political situation. He saw the rise of Cyrus to power. He saw that Babylon was about to fall and that the Jewish exiles were soon to go free. To Cyrus then he ascribes an intimate relation to Yahweh. Cyrus is Yahweh's "shepherd" (44:28) "his anointed" (45:1), the one "whom Jehovah loveth" (48:14) We have then again, a prophet

(1) Ibid., p. 252



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becoming politically influential. By the fact of his continued preachment of the greatness and goodness of Cyrus and the inevitable downfall of Babylon he instilled into his people the spirit of cooperation with their deliverer and thus opened the way for the eventual reconstruction of Jerusalem.

In still another way this prophet opened the way to a greater and better state of politics. With him the narrow bounds of nationalism are beginning to be broken down to give place to a larger universalism. It was noticed that Jeremiah had an inkling of this great thought but did not carry it far enough. Ezekiel had glimpses of it but it was lost in his particularism. Isaiah had occasional visions of it but it was to be accomplished only in the distant future. With Deutero-Isaiah, however, Israel's religion is to be the religion of the world and as such political differences will disappear. "A law shall go forth from me, and I will establish my justice for a light of the peoples. My righteousness is near, my salvation is gone forth, and mine arms shall judge the peoples; the isles shall wait for me and on my arm shall they trust . . . . . Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else. By myself have I sworn, the word has gone forth from my mouth in righteousness and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear" (Isa. 51:4,5; 45:22, 23)

Isaiah, A. S.: The Prophetic Movement in Israel p. 75  
 (2) Smith, J. M. S.: The Prophets and Their Times p. 122  
 (3) Wiedemann, F. O.: Prophecy and the Prophets p. 249  
 (4) Otley, A. L.: A Short History of the Hebrews p. 283  
 (5) Ibid., p. 222



becoming politically influential. By the fact of his continued presence of the greatness and goodness of Cyrus and the inevitable downfall of Babylon he instilled into his people the spirit of cooperation with their deliverer and thus opened the way for the eventual reconstruction of Jerusalem.

In still another way this prophet opened the way to a greater and better state of politics. With him the narrow bounds of nationalism are beginning to be broken down to give place to a larger universalism. It was noticed that Jeremiah had an inkling of this great thought but did not carry it far enough. Ezekiel had glimpses of it but it was lost in his particularism. Isaiah had occasional visions of it but it was to be accomplished only in the distant future. With Deutero-Isaiah, however, Israel's religion is to be the religion of the world and as such political differences will disappear. "A few shall go forth from me, and I will establish my justice for a light of the peoples. My righteousness is near, my salvation is gone forth, and mine arm shall judge the peoples; the isles shall wait for me and on my arm shall they trust . . . . Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else. By myself have I sworn, the word has gone forth from my mouth in righteousness and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear" (Isa. 45:1-5).

32, 33)



## Haggai and Zechariah

The high hopes that had been raised by Deutero-Isaiah were not realized by the returning exiles nor for that matter at any time during the postexilic period. The people were subject to foreign governments and lived under discouraging circumstances. This, however, rather than killing the national or racial consciousness caused a reaction in the reverse direction. (1) An attempt was made to conserve this in a legalistic system. Prophecy was naturally affected by this and we find most of the remaining prophets reflecting this legalistic tendency.

The prophets Haggai and Zechariah who lived and worked in Jerusalem from 520 to 516 B.C. are illustrations of this principle at work (2) They were both partners in the attempt to awaken Judah to the preparation for the messianic dispensation which they thought near at hand. (3) Their appearance was partially caused by the unsettled state of the Persian Empire and partly through the influence of pressing religious needs. The great Babylonian Empire came to an end in 538 B. C. when Cyrus took possession of the great city without striking a serious blow. (4)

When Cyrus came into power he issued an edict permitting the Jews to return to Judah. (5) From the way in

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- (1) Knudson, A. G.: The Prophetic Movement in Israel p. 75  
 (2) Smith, J. M. P.: The Prophets and Their Times p. 192  
 (3) Eiselen, F. C.: Prophecy and the Prophets p. 249  
 (4) Ottley, R. L.: A Short History of the Hebrews p. 228  
 (5) *ibid.*, p. 229



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The high hopes that had been raised by Darius-Isidiah were not realized by the returning exiles nor for that matter at any time during the postexilic period. The people were subject to foreign governments and lived under discouraging circumstances. This, however, rather than killing the national or racial consciousness caused a reaction in the reverse direction. (1) An attempt was made to conserve this in a legalistic system. Prophecy was naturally affected by this and we find most of the remaining prophecies reflecting this legalistic tendency.

The prophets Haggai and Zechariah who lived and worked in Jerusalem from 520 to 518 B.C. are illustrations of this principle at work. (2) They were both partners in the attempt to awaken Judah to the preparation for the messianic dispensation which they thought near at hand. (3) Their appearance was partially caused by the unsettled state of the Persian Empire and partly through the influence of pressing religious needs. The great Babylonian Empire came to an end in 539 B.C. when Cyrus took possession of the great city without striking a serious blow. (4)

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 (4) Otfey, R.L.: A Short History of the Hebrews p. 228  
 (5) Ibid., p. 229



which they had been looking forward to the event one would suppose that everyone dropped their work and rushed gladly, almost madly back to Jerusalem. The opposite was true. Very few took advantage of the opportunity. They were satisfied and prosperous where they were.

Meanwhile those who had returned were loathe to do anything themselves toward the rebuilding of the Temple which they had returned to build. About 523 B.C. however, things began to happen in the Persian Empire which stirred them to activity. Darius Hystaspis assumed the Persian throne by the assassination of his predecessor in 521 B.C. Similar preceding events led to revolt all over the Persian Empire.

"Babylonia revolted twice, as did also Susiania, Media, Sagartia, Margiana, and Persia each organized a movement of rebellion." (1)

Ezekiel had taught the Jews to look for a world conflict as ushering in the new dispensation. This world movement which Haggai and Zechariah saw would naturally cause them to think that the time had arrived.

Consequently we find Haggai urging immediate work upon the task of rebuilding the Temple (Hag. 1:2-11). It is indicative of the influence of the prophet that about three weeks after this challenge the people under Zerubbabel, the governor, and Joshua, the high priest, entered upon the task (Hag. 1:12-15). Again just a little later he had to encourage the people to keep them from quitting the task which they had

(1) Smith, J.M.P.: The Prophets and Their Times p. 195



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Nabuchadnezzar had taught the Jews to look for a world conflict as ushering in the new dispensation. This world movement which Hegel and Schopenhauer saw would naturally cause them to think that the time had arrived.

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started (Hag. 2:1-9).

Haggai was nobly seconded in his efforts to stimulate the energies of the people by his younger contemporary Zechariah. He began his ministry two months after Haggai (520 B.C.) and continued to uphold the hands of the builders until the end of their task was in sight. (1) His spiritual ideals were in harmony with those of former prophets and his primary concern was to have the life of the people conform to their faith. (Zech. 2:1-5).

The political influence which these two prophets wielded was in their emphasis upon the building of the Temple with its accompanying religious practices. The national entity was no longer sustained in a monarchy but in legalism. By their influence then in preserving religion they exerted their political influence.

Malachi, Trito-Isaiah, Obadiah

The post-exilic character of Malachi, Obadiah and Isaiah Chapters 56-66 is beyond question but as to what part of that period they belong we cannot definitely say. It is now quite generally agreed that Malachi lived near the time of Ezra and Nehemiah -- about 450 B.C. (2) The prophet whose work is contained in Isaiah 56-66 who is called Trito-Isaiah and Obadiah very likely lived somewhere near the same period. (3)

We cannot even be certain that Malachi was the name of the man who wrote our present book for the word "Malachi"

- (1) Gordon, A. R. : The Prophets of the Old Testament p. 285
- (2) Knudson, A.C. : The Prophetic Movement in Israel p. 77
- (3) Smith, J.M.P. : The Prophets and Their Times p. 207



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- (1) Gordon, A. R. : The Prophets of the Old Testament p. 285
- (2) Knudson, A. C. : The Prophetic Movement in Israel p. 77
- (3) Smith, J. M. P. : The Prophets and Their Times p. 207



means "my messenger" and is used in this general sense in Mal. 3:1 where it may have been confused by an editor for the name of the prophet. (1) He continued in the same line of thought that had characterized Haggai and Zechariah with insistence upon pure Temple worship and the externals of religion. As to the political influence which he may have exerted very little can be said.

Although it is difficult to deal with Isaiah 56-66 as a unit the author of the majority of the material is thought to have belonged to this same general period. (2) The situation which is faced is one of profound discouragement. Consequently the prophet devotes much of his time to inspiration of a disheartened people. To that end he prophesies disaster and destruction to the foes of Yahweh and Judah. (Isa. 61:5; 66:16-19) On the other hand we find in the same collection of prophecies the opposite view. "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples." (Isa. 56:7) The two views seem antithetical but in reality are not. Destruction is to come to Yahweh's enemies but if foreigners love the name of Yahweh they are acceptable. (Isa. 56:3-7) Legalistic purity was not compromised by this prophet but was made a subordinate value as compared with ethics. (Isa. 58:3-7; 9f; 59:3,4,6,13, 51; 61:8).

Trito-Isaiah seems to be touching here upon the universalism of Deutero-Isaiah. His political influence is mostly religious. Inspiration and hope were the political

- (1) Knudson, A. C.: The Prophetic Movement in Israel p. 78  
 (2) Gordon, A. R.: The Prophets of the Old Testament p. 300



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The little book of Obadiah brings to mind the earlier book of Nahum. As Nahum hurled invectives against Nineveh so Obadiah looked at Edom. He seemed to be aware of a movement on foot to attack Edom and with undisguised satisfaction he contemplates the outlook. He sees the coming destruction of Edom as punishment for its share in the humiliation of Judah by the Babylonians in 586 B. C. (vs. 10-14) This is practically the sole interest of the book. "The spirit of such writings is easily understood, and is not wholly without warrant; but it is unworthy of the best standards of the great prophets." (1)

Joel, Zechariah 9-14, Isaiah 24-27

The dates of these prophecies is probably in the early part of the Greek period of Jewish history. Times had changed. Alexander the Great overthrew Darius III at Issus in 333 B. C. and Greece succeeded Persia to the mastery of the oriental world. (2) In this period the interests of the prophets are also greatly changed from that of their great predecessors. No longer are they interested primarily with current issues, national and international politics of their own age but have transferred their interest to the future. "They have lost hope in the possibility of remaking the present political and social order and are looking to the days to come for the Golden Age to dawn. Their interests are no longer

- (1) Smith, J.M.P: The Prophets and Their Times p. 215  
 (2) Ottley, R. L: A Short History of the Hebrews p. 251



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(1) Smith, J.W.P.: The Prophets and Their Times p. 215  
(2) Orlay, R. L.: A Short History of the Hebrews p. 251



ethical and social; they are eschatological. They despair of the present, and hope for the future." (1)

The two great topics of Joel are the plague of locusts and the Day of Yahweh. Upon the passing of the locusts he talks of the coming terrors which the Day of Yahweh will bring to pass. In Zechariah 9-14 the same type of thought is seen. Yahweh will destroy all the peoples of the coast lands but Judah and Jerusalem are guaranteed safety. (Zech. 9:1-9)

In Isaiah 24-27 we see two types of material. In the one the complete overthrow of the existing social order is looked for. It is to come as punishment of the sins of the nations. In the other type the lyric poet is singing a song of gratitude to Yahweh for the overthrow of the nations that he sees about to come. In both types however, the change is to be effected by the intervention of Yahweh and not through human agencies.

The political influence of men with such ideas about the world government would be very slight. They simply came upon the scene, delivered their polemics and passed on without materially altering the situation.

### Jonah

Although the book of Jonah is not actually prophetic it embodies much of the prophetic ideal and is indeed one of the great books of the Bible. (2) The book was not written

(1) Smith, J.M.P.: Prophets and Their Times p. 229

(2) Gordon, A. R.: Prophets of the Old Testament p. 347



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(1) Smith, J.M.P.: Prophets and Their Times p. 223  
(2) Gordon, A.R.: Prophets of the Old Testament p. 247



by Jonah but about him. There was actually a prophet by that name who lived in the time of Jeroboam II and was credited with having foretold the conquests of that king. (II Kings 14:25) He is thought of as a popular prophet who supported the policies of the king and promised him success and prosperity. "Jonah stands for narrow and exclusive Israel, while Nineveh represents the hated heathen world." (1)

As the story is given to us Jonah, the prophet, is commanded to preach against Nineveh. At first he tries to escape on a ship but is brought back. The second time he obeys and the city repents. He apparently wanted Nineveh to be destroyed and refused to preach for fear they would repent and be spared by Yahweh (Jonah 4:2-3). When they do repent he becomes sullen and goes outside the city gates to wait for destruction. There a gourd grew up to protect him, was cut by a worm and when it wilted Jonah was angry again. This time God chides him by saying that he pities a little gourd but he wants the whole city of Nineveh to be destroyed.

The story in a parable is the history of Judah. They were supposed to make the goodness of God known to all nations but failed and were cast into exile. Finally they were brought back and they went about their work in a revengeful spirit. Thus the story of Jonah becomes a parable to meet the national exclusiveness and racial pride of the author's times. (2) In extreme type Jonah is the natural outcome of the moral pride of Pharisaic Judaism but on the other hand the book of Jonah is

(1) Knudson, A.C.: The Prophetic Movement in Israel p.79

(2) Cadbury, H.J.: National Ideals in the Old Testament p.222



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(1) Anderson, A. C.: The Prophetic Movement in Israel p. 79  
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one of the greatest utterances concerning political propriety which we have. It is not nationalism but universalism which is to be the ultimate political entity.

### Daniel

With the book of Daniel the Apocalypse has reached its full strength. The hero of the book is a Jewish exile and the scene is laid in the Exile though the book itself is centuries later. Through the arguments of language used and historical situations depicted the date of the book has been placed between 167 and 165 B. C. (1) Its purpose was to arouse the energies of the Jews to combat the peril that faced them.

Antiochus IV had ascended the throne of Syria in 175 B. C. and was very desirous of hastening the process of Hellenizing the Orient. To this end he had deposed Onias, the high priest of Judah, and had put Jason in his place. Jason had established a Greek gymnasium almost under the shadow of the Temple itself. This caused some discontent among the priestly order and the two forces came to blows. Onias was driven from the city but meantime Menelaus offered Antiochus a bribe for the office of high priest and was given the position in preference to Jason. Then trouble started anew. To put these contending forces in their place Antiochus made a side trip to Jerusalem (170 B.C.) on his way back from a

(1) Gordon, A. R.: The Prophets of the Old Testament p. 340



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war with Egypt. He <sup>looted</sup>~~visited~~ the Temple and put a great many citizens to death. Continuing his policy of Hellenization he tried to stamp out Yahweh worship and institute the worship of Zeus. (1)

It was against all of this that the apocalyptic book of Daniel was written. In a series of stories from the past which showed that Yahweh had taken care of his servants in the past amid all kinds of dangers it tried to show that he would still care for his people. It then relates a series of visions foretelling the future of the Jews down to and beyond the Maccabean period. Since it had been accurately foretold in the past it was to be supposed that the later prophecy was correct.

It is difficult for us to understand how such a story could realize the purposes of the author but they thought differently then. At any rate, "they fought and suffered, buoyed up by stories and visions such as are found in the book of Daniel. In the strength of the faith and enthusiasm nourished by this kind<sup>d</sup> of reading and meditation they finally ~~then~~ threw off the yoke of the Syrian tyrant and re-established a kingdom of Judah in the holy city." (2)

- (1) Smith, J. M.P.: Prophets and Their Times p. 242  
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## VII ABIDING INFLUENCE

One cannot read the prophets without feeling that they were not merely living for their own contemporary civilization but that they lived and wrote for posterity. The great truths about which they spoke and wrote are as vital today as they were in the time in which they were uttered. If we were to run through the whole system of modern civilization we would find stressed again and again the very elements which constituted the heart of the message of the prophets. Particularly in the political situation can be traced the influence which the Hebrew prophets have had.

Since the inception of the democratic form of government in America a great deal has been heard about the avoidance of entangling alliances with foreign nations. The farewell speech of George Washington might well have taken root in the prophecies of either Isaiah or Hosea. Isaiah was continuously preaching against the appeal to other nations for help and entering into alliances with them. He even went one step further than some of our modern statesmen and affirmed that after an alliance had once been formed it was then up to the contracting parties to live up to the terms of the agreement. If Hosea could see the vacillating way in which some nations flit from one nation to another trying to make friends with the most powerful he would undoubtedly say as he did of his own country, "Ephraim is like a silly dove, without understanding: they call unto Egypt, they go to Assyria." (Hos. 7:11)



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There are other places where the political influence which the prophets have exerted have been on a higher plane but that is one definitely traceable influence.

The two prophets who did most in the political realm were Isaiah and Jeremiah. In the time of Isaiah there was perhaps not the same attitude toward men of religion interfering with politics as there is today but he was able to accomplish great things by his personal contact with the rulers. With complete fearlessness he dared defy the king to his face and tell him that the policy which he was following was not right. All of the prophets exhibited this ability but Isaiah did it with a poise that is astonishing. If there were more men at the present time who were willing to do that kind of thing instead of being afraid to risk their reputation and their economic backing there might not be the racketeering, murder, graft, and vice that we have in our modern civilization. There are a few men today courageous enough to do that but in the majority of the cases their presence is conspicuous by its absence. Jeremiah risked not only his reputation but his property and his very life by his insistence upon holding certain political ideals. He was beaten, thrown into prison, and suffered untold humiliation because he so tenaciously upheld his point of view. He was a patriot of the highest sort and yet was accused of treason by his countrymen. When the city of Jerusalem was surrounded by the enemy and destruction was inevitable he boldly proclaimed that the city should surrender to avoid being completely demolished. He believed that the



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murder, graft, and vice that we have in our modern civilization. There are a few men today courageous enough to do that but in the majority of the cases their presence is conspicuous by its absence. Jeremiah risked not only his reputation but his property and his very life by his insistence upon holding certain

political ideals. He was beaten, thrown into prison, and suffered untold humiliation because he so tenaciously held his point of view. He was a patriot of the highest sort and yet was accused of treason by his countrymen. When the city of Jerusalem was surrounded by the enemy and destruction was inevitable he boldly proclaimed that the city should surrender to avoid being completely demolished. He believed that the



nation could be saved to a greater extent by surrender than by foolishly trying to hold out against a foe which greatly outnumbered them. His nationalism went much farther and his insight much deeper than that of the contemporary leaders. If that spirit were manifested today much of the misunderstanding between nations could be avoided. Retain nationalities, yes, but not at the expense of international conflict which is always so disastrous.

Much is heard in these days about justice. We have a whole judicial system which is organized for the purpose of meting out justice and yet how hopelessly is that purpose thwarted. When the rich can buy their punishers and the innocent can be "railroaded" into an unjust sentence it is high time that someone face the situation and declare as Amos, "Let justice roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream" (Amos 5:24). At the time when Amos came into Israel thundering his message of doom the political conditions were not greatly different than they are now and that is the diagnosis which he made of the trouble. The land should be overrun with justice and righteousness should be the governing policy. When he has mentioned the latter he has hit again upon the keynote of the prophecy of Isaiah. Isaiah has been called the Prophet of Righteousness and not unwisely so for he was continually stressing it. If political tangles are to be straightened and governmental difficulties made right they must be rooted in and motivated by a spirit of righteousness. At a time when political positions are regarded as spoils of the battle and



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can be handed out as plums to the boys who were good to the party which won the election regardless of the merit of the individual it is time for an Isaiah to come upon the scenes to say something about righteousness.

If Micah could have seen a time when there were between six and ten million people out of work and still other men with millions of dollars at their disposal it is probable that his book could not be confined within the limits of seven small chapters. A man of the country he was obsessed with the idea of the oppression of the poor. He looked to the city and exclaimed, "They build up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with iniquity" (Micah 3:10). If he could have seen the massive cities of our time built upon the lives of the downtrodden poor it is likely that he would have invented more powerful invectives to hurl in the direction of the economic overlords. The whole social and economic system under which we live could well be taught a lesson by this man from the hills.

Ordinarily when we think of Ezekiel we think of visions of wheels or dry bones and think that he is far removed from the realm of politics. While this is true in one sense in another he has presented an entirely new basis upon which politics can be based. The practical necessity of a fallen state caused him to put religion upon an individual rather than a national basis. With him the individual came to have primary significance while the nation was only an inadequate means to an end. Not only in that regard was he greatly significant for the political reconstruction of the nation



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but he organized these individuals which he made primary into a church-centered organization. While the practical theocracy which he formulated might not be the answer to the modern problems of government the fundamental idea is one to be seriously considered. When the individual is centered in the church instead of the nation the political economy programs and intrigues for the preservation of the nation become an unnecessary factor. When men live God-centered instead of nation-centered lives their horizon includes national boundaries in such a small corner that they become very insignificant.

While the emphasis which Ezekiel laid upon individualism was a great thing it was greatly superseded by the idea of universalism which Deutero-Isaiah put forth. Man has always been a warring animal but in his best and highest moments he has dreamed of perpetual peace and the universal brotherhood. In the time of the cave man it might have been necessary to go around with a big club in ones hand but such a person now would appear ludicrous. Imagine the uproar a man would create on Broadway if he were to walk around carrying a big five foot club over his shoulder and using it to advantage when someone came too near him. The police would soon have him in a wagon and off for an insane ward in some hospital and yet men walk along that same Broadway without a club but with far more dangerous ideas concerning national integrity and they are called the leaders of our generation. For economic or other motives they offer no resistance to some propaganda for war or even to the actual conflict of nations. Is it possible



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that they could cry for a bigger navy and a larger standing army when they have read the prophets? Micah at one time said, "They shall beat their swords into plow-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

(Micah 4:3b) In his vision of the Messianic future Isaiah said, "And the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them."

(Isa. 11:6) Deutero-Isaiah in putting forth his idea of universalism and relating the words of Yahweh says, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else" (Isa. 45:22). Yahweh speaks again to Israel, "I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation to the end of the earth" (Isa. 49:6), and "my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples" (Isa. 56:7).

The World Court, The League of Nations, and the idea of universal peace all have ancestry in prophetic thought. It is one of the greatest ideas in the Old Testament and is touched upon by almost all of the prophets. That is not to say that the technical organization of such ideas is found in the Old Testament but the main idea is rooted there. That, in fact, is the abiding influence which the prophets have had upon politics. They stressed great universal truths which even today are still in the process of being worked out and when once accomplished will be a Utopia much to be desired.



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## SUMMARY

In summarizing we may say that prophecy arose out of nationalism was primarily concerned with nationalism and greatly effected the national policies. "It was the national need . . . . which gave rise to the movement. It was the national peril in the ninth century which led to the prophetic activity under the leadership of Elijah and Elisha. It was the threatened overthrow of the nation at the hands of the Assyrians which stirred the eighth century prophets to speech and action. It was a similar peril to the nation a century later at the hands of the Scythians and Babylonians which led Zephaniah and Jeremiah to prophesy and which formed the disturbing background of the earlier part of Ezekiel's ministry. It was the prospect of a national restoration which inspired the messages of Deutero-Isaiah. It was the attempted destruction of the national religion which the book of Daniel sought to thwart. Thus, throughout its entire history prophecy was actuated by national considerations. It was the national life that gave birth to prophecy. Without the contagion of national feeling there would have been no prophetic movement. It was the value <sup>consciously</sup> consequently or unconsciously attributed to the nation which formed the presupposition of the movement as a whole." (1)

To stop at that point, however, would not have been in keeping with the character of the prophets as a whole.

(1) Knudson, A.C.: The Prophetic Movement in Israel p. 88



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They not only arose out of national conditions but greatly effected the way in which the nation should act in political crises. The movement as a whole reminds one of a well ordered ship in which there is always some competent man at the helm directing the course of the ship. So it was in Israel, whenever a stormy political crisis was seen approaching there was seen a prophet directing the activity of the nation.

When the people of Israel needed some great hand and mind to lead them out of the Exodus, Moses was on hand to do just that. When they needed constant remonstrances to keep them going in the endeavor which they had started and to keep them from becoming too corrupt as a nation the pre-literary prophets were there. When they were becoming too diversified in their interests and separating into tribes Samuel stepped forward to be instrumental in organizing them <sup>into</sup> ~~with~~ a united monarchy. When the ruling house came to take too much for granted and to become corrupt in their practices an Elijah and Elisha emerged to face the situation and eventually to instigate a revolution which changed the ruling house.

With the eighth century prophets we find the peak of prophecy and the greatest influence. With his ever recurring note of justice and doom "the father of written prophecy" left a great imprint upon the mind of the nation. Like a flaming meteor he shot through Israel singing his dirge of doom and made the people stop to think. Changing Amos' song of justice into one of love, Hosea came upon the scene



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With his heart aching he foretold the great doom that was approaching because of the sins of his own people. To him they listened while Amos had to command attention. Standing out like the outline of a great mountain at dusk is Isaiah, the statesman, the prince of prophets. Through his strenuous opposition <sup>to</sup> ~~of~~ foreign alliances attempted by Ahaz and Hezekiah and his message of hope during the siege of Jerusalem he kept alive the faith of Israel for he firmly believed that "faith brings fixity". Coming at the same time and bringing practically the same message from the country rather than the city viewpoint was Micah. We might think of him as the night watchman ~~stepring~~ steering our political ship of state in his own individual manner but in the course already set by Isaiah.

During the seventh century we are in a different sea in a different ship with new helmsmen. Standing above them all is the great prophet Jeremiah. Having mistaken the thundercloud of the Scythian invasion for a hurricane he was forced to retire for a few years but he came back with a greater determination and more powerful influence than before. As the political advisor to the king and prophet to the people he transcends his political contemporaries as a captain does a common seaman. Even his prophetic contemporaries ~~of~~ Zephaniah, Nahum, and Habakkuk seem to have had relatively little political significance when compared to him.

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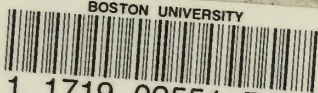
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